



messing about in **BOATS**

Special Features This Issue
"Kokopelli Goes South"
"Romance in a Whitehall Skiff" – "Larklet"

Volume 23 – Number 23

April 15, 2006



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Commentary...

Bob Hicks, Editor



Hopefully by the time you are reading this, the confusion created by the March 15 issue having the four-page cover wraparound from the April 1 issue on it will have been clarified by my brief explanation in my follow-up "Commentary" in the real April 1 issue. While it at first may not have been noticeable, once you discovered that the "In This Issue..." contents on Page 2 did not match what was in the magazine, confusion surely must have set in. "What has old Bob gone and done now?" probably crossed your minds. And, I suspect, when you did get what purported to be the April 1 issue, you wondered whatever happened to your March 15 issue? Probably some of you called or emailed us to tell us that you did not get your March 15 issue. I'll find out how many over the next few weeks from now (March 14).

The process we go through to be sure you get what we send off to the printer (300 miles away) twice a month involves our receiving by email (to my daughter's office) a proof of the issue as it will be printed. This is not a physical copy or mock-up of an actual magazine in my own hands to review, it is something called a pdf file that comes via email and has to be viewed a page at a time on a computer screen. The page image is too small to easily read any of the text, which we had already proofed ourselves anyway. Nor does the screen permit us to view facing pages together. What this sort of proof is limited to, really, is showing that the pages we sent off are as they appeared and are in the proper order. We viewed the pdf of the March 15 issue and it was as it should have been so we okayed it.

When a carton of April 1 issues arrived I was nonplussed for we had only just sent on the April 1 issue to be printed, no way could it have already been printed and mailed. Examination revealed that it was actually the March 15 issue with the April 1 cover wrap-around on it. Too late to do anything about it, 4,000 copies were already in the mail to you. Nothing could be gained by ranting about this to the printer. Damage control had to be undertaken so I stopped the production of the April 1 issue for a day until I could get a revised cover wrap-around, which included my explanation, off to the printer.

How did it happen? Apparently there was some technical glitch with the correct March 15 cover wrap and the press room sent it back to pre-press to be fixed up. Their instructions were somehow interpreted to be that they wanted the "new" (April 1) cover which they had just received in pre-press, so they sent that out to the press room rather than the fixed up March 15 cover. Nobody noticed!

I suppose this sort of screw-up is laughable to anyone in the real magazine publishing world, but at our mom-and-pop level it does happen from time to time and we have to weather the consequences. Only last fall the October 1 Page 2 containing the "In This Issue..." contents and my "Commentary" was repeated in the October 15 issue and I heard about it from some of you, understandably so.

We have had several printers for the magazine over its 23 years, changes were made only when some really unacceptable conditions arose. Usually these changes were instigated by some suddenly arising development. One printer was shut down suddenly by their creditors with my current issue original layouts locked up inside by the sheriff. Getting them out involved a bit of finagling. Another suddenly announced a giant 33% price increase to catch up with rising paper costs they had been absorbing over a couple of years. I could not afford this. A third announced to me one day when I brought in the current issue that they could no longer print it for me as they were closing up shop. No advance notice at all.

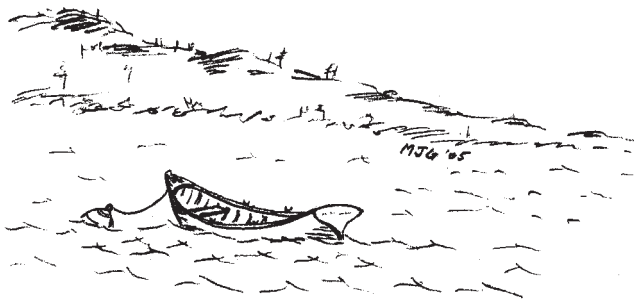
With our twice a month schedule there is little time in which find an affordable replacement printer. Fortunately we came to our present printer through friends following that last mentioned surprise and have been with them now going on 10 years. After some start-up quality problems we've been on a roll since, with the occasional mistake such as this most recent one to absorb. Having survived far more traumatic experiences with printers, I am content still for they are good people to do business with and none of the printers who have called over these years soliciting our business had anything significantly better to offer in service or price.

In This Issue...

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On the Cover...

The ceramic sculpture gracing this issue's cover is by reader Peter Owens, who follows up on each of his sculptures by writing a story about it. You'll find the story about this one in this issue, "Romance in a Whitehall Skiff."



By Matthew Goldman

From the Journals of Constant Waterman

Having collected eight watertight steel drums, I purchased some carriage bolts and proceeded to build a small raft. It needed to be just large enough for pick-up truck loads of lumber. We were building an octagonal cottage on an island and needed to transport materials the last mile. Back when Grandpa was a lad, he could have driven his team across the ice, the glacier hadn't totally receded from Connecticut in those far-off times.

It being tropical once again, the wooly mammoth seldom seen before Christmas, I decided instead to build a raft of rough cut rafters from an old barn I was dismantling. I ran them once through the rip saw and bolted them together. It wasn't everyone in my neighborhood (population 300) who could boast a raft made entirely of chestnut. I constructed an X-shaped frame between two uprights, aft, to support the steering oar which would double as a punt pole. My deck was only the thwart ways stringers necessary to hold the drums in place, after all, there would be lumber stacked knee deep during the downstream passages.

Rafting on the river requires waiting on the tide and hoping that the wind will be advantageous. Most of that year we lived our lives according to the sun and wind and tide. We couldn't be bothered even to wind our sundial. When anyone asked what time we'd be back on the morrow, we'd think of the river, its ebb and flow, and answer, "Well, maybe about mid afternoon if the wind is out of the south." It was truly a pristine way to live, with the scantest of commitment to civilization.

On the island, we rose with the sun, worked until it became too hot, bathed in the river, ate our lunch on its banks, and napped in the shade of the huge silver maple to which we made fast the raft. Occasionally a boat would come by and we'd have to scramble about to find our clothes. We hadn't a pier at the island, the only place deep enough to moor the raft against the bank was on my neighbor's land. We merely tied up to the maple tree and passed the boards ashore. Then we carried them on our shoulders the last hundred yards to our clearing.

At that time the wheel had not yet been invented. Neither had cellular phones. We never kept a radio, neither the Beatles nor Tchaikovsky ever dresses appropriately for the woods. Our music was the sighing of the breeze among the cottonwoods, the phoebe calling to her mate from the spicebush by the door, the long drawn note of the oil tanker tracking the errant channel across the river. In the evenings we lit our Coleman lantern and scribbled or sketched in our journals. When the weather was fair we cooked on an open fire. We wrapped potatoes and onions in foil and set them among the coals. Occasionally we invited a fish to supper.

A simple life, as idyllic as anything found between two covers. Sometimes we waxed domestic and shooed the voracious deer from our vegetable garden. For diversion we took our little canoe and went foraging in the salt marsh pond that spreads behind the island. Above us, the osprey might poise in the sultry sky and, from the reeds, the blackbird practice his ancient, ancient air. Otherwise it would verge upon the serene.

In June we picked cattail flowers, which we mixed with egg and fried on the iron skillet. At Solstice we invited some friends, they had their own canoes, of course, and built a quiet fire out on the sandbar. We feasted on fish and cattail cakes and homemade dandelion wine. We danced on the sand and toasted the longest day of the year and toasted the constellations. Later we drifted upon the moonlit river in our canoes and noted the lights in darkened houses along the farther shore, the flickering lights of television, bringing a facile reality into people's jaded lives.

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Sept 17-24: Cedar Canvas Canoe

Sept 24-Oct 1: Cedarstrip Canoe



For more information about the school, classes,
and faculty, visit www.adkboatschool.com >

You write to us about...

Activities & Events...

Charleston Maritime Festival

We would like to invite our wooden boat friends, enthusiasts, and hobbyists to participate in the Charleston Maritime Festival June 9-11. The central theme of this year's event will be all about wooden boat appreciation, family boatbuilding, and South Carolina's rich maritime heritage!

The main attractions will include family boatbuilding for 12 to 15 families, a Charleston Pilot boat, Navy boats, tours of the *Spirit of South Carolina*, free sailing, food, music, and more. The Maritime Festival is a major fundraiser for the South Carolina Maritime Heritage Foundation and our quest to build the ultimate wooden boat, the schooner *Spirit of South Carolina*, for education at sea. There has been great progress on our tall ship and we are excited to share it with everyone!

We look forward to seeing our good friends and making new ones. For detailed information please call us at (843) 343-6003 or email <crabbycottage@aol.com>. Rain or shine, we have always had a good time!

Mark and Sherry Bayne, Wooden Boat Exhibits, Charleston Maritime Festival, Charleston, SC

North House Folk School Courses

Our 2006 schedule of courses related to traditional boating numbers about two dozen as of early spring with more to be added later in the season. These are all listed in our calendar in our Winter 2006 issue of our newsletter, *Shavings*.

Interested readers can request a copy from us at (888) 387-9762 or go to our website at www.northhouse.org.

North House Folk School, P.O. Box 759, Grand Marais, MN 55604

Working Waterfront At Clearwater Festival

The Clearwater Festival (Great Hudson River Revival) will take place at Croton Point Park on the Hudson River on Fathers' Day weekend, June 17-18. The festival continues to be a spectacular celebration with solar powered stages, diverse performance arts, crafts, environmental exhibits, food, and a Working Waterfront. The focus is the Hudson River. Working Waterfront is an ongoing feature of the Revival. We are planning many activities to get people on the water in small boats.

Working Waterfront will present representative vessels for visits and use. These boats are traditional and contemporary vessels, all active in historical, recreational, or commercial service. The boats and the grand sloop *Clearwater* will be on the Hudson River, some with scheduled sails. A fleet of small boats will be available in which to messabout.

Messabout is a major Waterfront feature that gives owners, builders, and users of small boats a chance to meet and swap rides and stories. The public attending our festival will be invited to join the boat people on the water. The intimacy of being on the water and working or playing with small boats draws people into a natural environmental advocacy.

For further detailed information about participating or attending, contact us.

Stan Dickstein, (845) 462-3113, <dickstein@vh.net>; Eric Russell, (718) 646-1224; Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, (845) 454-7673, <revival@clearwater.org>

Information of Interest...

Amazing What You Learn as a MAIB Reader

MAIB, February 15, 2006, arrived yesterday and, being a northern Ohioan, my interest perks up as Dean Raffaelli starts his "Gunkhole" story with mention of being in "the southernmost of the Great Lakes." He's talking about Lake Michigan and I'm waiting to read how he gets there from Lake Erie.

But then I realize he thinks Lake Michigan is the southernmost. I dig for a U.S. map and see, to my surprise, I'd never realized that the southern tip of Lake Michigan is about on line with Cleveland, Ohio. A lesson learned, for sure.

But I get an "aha" of my own when I Google the latitudes and find that Ruggles Beach, Ohio, is the southernmost one can get on Lake Erie, fully 14 miles south of the southernmost shore of Lake Michigan over in the Gary, Indiana, environs.

That was yesterday and I am explaining this all to my wife as I'm looking at the map and Googling latitudes, and she says, "You know, that's going to be a question on Jeopardy some day."

This evening, 24 hours later, danged if a Jeopardy "answer" in the water category was "the southernmost of the Great Lakes." "What is Lake Erie" was the question!

Richard Ellers, Warren, OH

Marine Restoration and Salvage Relocates

I have recently moved my shop, Marine Restoration and Salvage in Orleans on Cape Cod, to a new permanent location at the former Compass Classic Yachts shop. The move has allowed us to expand operations in square footage and production. A 2,400 square foot addition was recently completed, which will become the boatbuilding shop, keeping the original building as a woodshop. This expansion will create greater flexibility and efficiency.

Marine Restoration and Salvage has been in business since 1999 and has grown to include restoration and repair, custom boat building, millwork, and spar fabrication. The staff has grown from my original one-woman shop to three fulltime employees and three very enthusiastic high school students. The support from the community at large, and the boatbuilding community especially, has been outstanding.

Included in my purchase of Compass Classic Yachts were four classic sailboat molds which I plan to continue to build as fiberglass production boats. One of the molds is a Bay Bird, designed by Starling Burgess in the 1920s for a sailing program in Marblehead, Massachusetts, which I intend to develop further as a potential class boat on nearby Pleasant Bay.

Last year was a big year for the shop at the old, smaller, more crowded location. In addition to the varied restoration and repair work, the crew built a 21'6" center console boat based on a skiff the customer had seen while traveling in Alaska. Our favorite project was the restoration of *See Duck*, a Fred Goeller catboat design from 1915 originally featured in *Rudder* magazine. This was a collaboration with nearby Arey's Pond Boat Yard, one of many such collaborations over the past six years. *See Duck* was built in the 1920s and lovingly maintained and sailed in Nantucket Harbor until recently. By this time she needed some new frames, a new deck, and interior. The trim, doors, and hatches were replaced with mahogany and she has a new hollow mast. She is now sailed on the Hudson River by her owners. Photographs detailing the restoration can be seen on our website.

We have contracted to build two cold-molded boats for Arey's Pond Boat Yard this season, a 16' catboat and a new 18' day sailer. Construction of both is currently underway in the new shop.

Suzanne Leahy, Marine Restoration and Salvage, 80 Rayber Rd., Orleans, MA 02653, (508) 240-0068, www.marinerestoration.com

Information Wanted...

What is This Boat?

I saw this neat boat in a side yard in Lahaina, Hawaii, a few years ago but a search of the neighborhood did not turn up anyone who knew about it. I like its lines and have wondered if plans for building it exist? If any readers recognize the boat, please let me know.

Richard Ellers, 426 Central Pkwy., Warren, OH 44483, <GeeRichard@aol.com>



Garvey Plans Wanted

I am in need of a set of plans for a Russ Adams garvey, a boat indigenous to my New Jersey area. Alternatively, a copy of the article about this boat in an early issue of *Small Boat Journal* (I do not recall which) would be helpful.

Adams built his 15' garveys in Somers Point, New Jersey, and many were in use in the '50s and '60s at Moyers's Rental Dock in Ocean City, New Jersey.

Kenneth Parks, 239 E. Greenfield Ave., Pleasantville, NJ 08232

This Magazine...

Golden Age of Messing About

The Golden Age of Messing About is upon us. In addition to Goldman and Kaiser you give us Philip Thiel, Peter Spectre, Robb White, Phil Bolger, and once a month Hugh Ware. Oh, and Mississippi Bob, too, all messing about with the written word.

John Ammerman, Brick, NJ

Suggestions for Changes

I know that suggestions for change are often met with doubt, skepticism, or outright yawning. If no changes are made with *MAIB* in the next ten years I will be just as happy as I am one of the biggest fans of the publication as it exists today. However, I cannot stop my creativity from occasionally bubbling up with ideas.

First, I would love to have the opportunity to provide feedback to some of authors. Most of the time a letter to the editor is just fine. But there are times when a direct communication would be more appropriate. That said, if there is any way to provide either an email or mailing address for authors, I think it would be just dandy. Authors like to hear from the readership.

Secondly, I wonder if you ever take your printer out to lunch? I mean they print *MAIB* twice a month like clockwork. I would suggest you invite them to lunch and let them know you are treating! Partway through the meal, ask if there would be any additional cost if you printed some or all photos in color. Now I do know that in days of old color was big bucks. I also know that today it is almost commonplace. It may be available for wee little difference, or no difference? If it is economically feasible, what an impact it could make.

Kent Lacey, Lake Suzy, FL

Editor Comments: Occasionally I have heeded reader suggestions for changes, like instituting a table of contents, for example. I wonder if those who submit articles would want to be directly accessible to readers' responses? It isn't often that I see such information supplied in other periodicals that I read. I'll try a sampling of opinions from a selection of upcoming contributors as to how they wish me to handle this. Color has become less costly with computerized prepress and printing but still adds significant expense to a printing bill, coated paper, additional color inks, and photo scanning. Our present financial equilibrium cannot stand any such added cost burden, like an overloaded skiff with gunwales not quite awash. An examination of full color publications will reveal a large percentage of pages occupied by color advertising which helps carry the extra cost of the color. Our advertisers do not include many who would be able or interested in paying much higher rates for color ads.

Better Delivery Than Snail Mail?

Could you increase your rates to send the magazine a better way than snail mail? My recent delivery experience is as follows:

December 15 arrived on January 26.

January 1 arrived on January 31.

January 15 arrived on January 20.

February 1 arrived on February 2.

Mobile, AL

Editor Comments: It appears that mail delivery has slowly gotten back to normal in the Mobile area after the Hurricane Katrina delays which included the USPS stopping ALL incoming mail for some time following the storm.

Yes, 3rd Class Bulk Mail is slow, so we mail each issue two weeks prior to its cover date. Even with that head start many receive their issues late, and often two at a time.

Our present mailing cost per copy is \$.29 (up from about \$.24), about \$7 of the \$28 you pay. To mail the magazine 1st Class would cost \$1.11 per copy, about \$27 of the \$28. Obviously a hefty price increase (about

\$20 to \$48 a year) would be needed. I doubt we'd last long at that price.

Second Class Mail for periodicals is an option that is more costly than what we pay now (not as much as 1st Class), requires much more complex paperwork, but does not guarantee priority delivery unless a periodical is daily or weekly. So I have not considered adopting it.

Will Still Be Boating

After 36 years of multi-type boating, we decided to sell our 34' Mainship used for cruising. Now we are left with an inflatable dinghy to sell (see "Classified Marketplace"). Do not be alarmed, I will still be boating with the following:

18' Eastern with 50hp, 4-stroke Suzuki; 13.5' Jim Thayer Livery Whitehall; 12' Lost Pond/Hornbeck kevlar canoe; 14' Lowe aluminum Sea Nymph V with 9.9hp, 4-stroke Johnson.

Keep up your energy level publishing *Messing About in Boats*. It provides great enjoyment twice a month to so many. I wish those complaining would stop expecting every issue to cover only their particular niche of boating. As you can see, I am not a sailor but enjoy all cruising, rowing, and canoeing articles. Special are the writings of Robb White, Matt Goldman, and Chris Kaiser. "As is" keeps most of yours readers happy most of the time, keep it up unchanged.

David Warner, Centerbrook, CT

Nice Folks Contributing

I received several requests as a follow-up on my Laguna Madre articles to write another explaining how the corkless monofilament gillnet method was discovered. I decided to just make it sort of an overview of Texas commercial fishing basic equipment and a tribute to those men, and I did some pen-and-ink drawings to enhance the story. I have a typical skiff with equipment drawn and some other things. I will submit all of this shortly for publication.

I was co-editor with a buddy for the Texas Game Warden Association magazine for several years, it drove us crazy but, like *MAIB*, it was grass roots and "a part of us."

I enjoyed reading about your paddling and biking with your friend, Charlie, and am looking forward to more articles about you guys in kayaks, rafts, hang gliders, whatever! I also particularly enjoyed Ginny Filiatrault's "A Patchwork of Boatyards" and David Simonds' "Falcon" in the February 15 issue. How many of us have been there? I also can't leave out mention of the gentle musings of Matthew Goldman's "From the Journals of Constant Waterman" either. You have some nice folks contributing.

Ron Bennett, Comfort, TX

Preserving Handmade Values

MAIB is the best investment we make every year. We both read it from cover to cover and share it with fellow, or would-be, boatheads.

Over the last few years my husband (mainly) and I have built two sea kayaks and a Dobler 16 sailboat and he is now starting work on a Rescue Minor inspired by our hero, Robb White's, boat. *MAIB* has helped us along the way.

Thank you for preserving and promoting hands-on and handmade values.

Lark Brandt, Hillsboro, OR

Doesn't Get Much Better!

February 1 cover, a catboat in full cry on a broad reach by one of my favorite artists. Doesn't get much better than that!

J.E. Nachod, Cincinnati, OH

Still First in Line After 15 Years

I have enjoyed the banter about fatuous prolixity, the many pros, and a few antis, for Robb White's technical discussions, the illuminating stuff from Hugh Ware (... if there is a tanker, and there is a reef, the two will surely meet sooner or later in an unpleasant way!), the thoughtful insights in "Window on the Water," and and the ever-thought-provoking stuff by Bolger, his Birdwatcher I and II has really intrigued me!

I continue to be delighted with *MAIB* and find it first on my list of items to read when the issue comes in. This has been the case now for about 15 years! May it continue for a long time.

Hermann Gucinski, Fairview, NC

Working on a Piece

Hard to believe that in six weeks there may be opportunity for boating, what with the ice, snow, and cold that abounds around here on March 1st. I'm working on a piece for your possible publication.

Andy Dregallo, Shoreham, VT

More People Should Be Aware

A couple of years ago I felt that more people should be aware of *MAIB* so I took some older copies around to some local libraries hoping they might find them of interest. Nothing came of it. I think the Chicago area does not breed messers, what with access to Lake Michigan not easy.

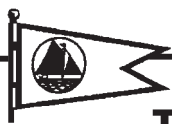
There are, however, other pretty hot boating areas around the Great Lakes with Michigan loaded with boating types. Other areas, such as the Mississippi River around Moline, Davenport, and Dubuque and the Illinois River around Peoria, have a lot of backwaters and sloughs that have a lot of small boating.

The problem is how do you interest the libraries in these areas? I think you are on the internet, isn't that helpful?

Herb Schneider, Western Spring, IL

Editor Comments: Yes, how do I reach all these potential readers? I've learned that just because people use and enjoy small boats does not mean that they might find *MAIB* of interest. Our bygone participation in small boat oriented shows has never justified our presence in terms of new subscriptions. If personal presence for three days in a show that attracted over 7,000 small boaters results in about two dozen new subscriptions and maybe sale of 400 sample copies at \$1 each, something is clearly missing here. Yes, we are on the internet with our own website and also participate with Duckworks offering internet ordering of subscriptions for us by credit card. In 2005 this presence contributed about 15% of our total new subscriptions despite multi-thousands of "hits" reported. Personal referrals by the present readership are still the most effective source of new subscribers.

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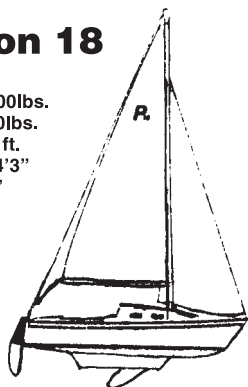
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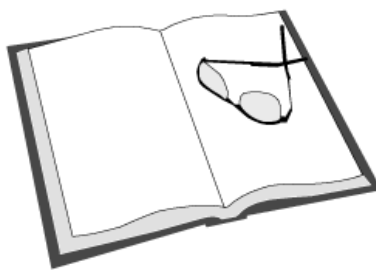
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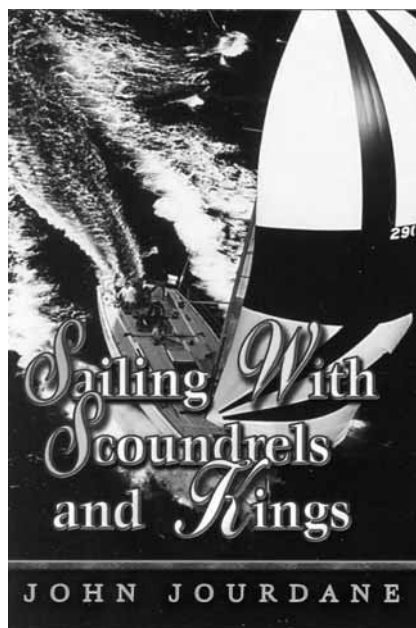
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Book Review

Sailing with Scoundrels and Kings

By John Jourdane
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The Publisher's "Sample" Review"

Hop aboard for a wild sail across the oceans of the world with John Jourdane, author of *Icebergs Port and Starboard*. This book chronicles 45 years of John's life sailing the oceans of the world.

You will travel from sailing dinghies in California to sailing with kings in Europe, from sailing the trade winds of Hawaii and Tahiti to racing around the world in the icy Roaring Forties near Antarctica, from cruising the beautiful atolls of Micronesia to visiting the wild game parks of South Africa. If you have an ounce of saltwater in your blood, you will love this book.

John Jourdane is one of the most experienced and respected offshore sailors in the world. He has sailed more than 300,000 miles, crossing the Pacific Ocean 47 times, the Atlantic Ocean 12 times, and circumnavigated the earth three times, including twice in the Whitbread Round the World Race.

Jourdane's highlights include being voted the "Best Racing Navigator in the World" by

Yachting Magazine in 1993 and winning the Navigator's Trophy in the Transpac, TransAtlantic, and Victoria-Maui Races. His lows have been losing many rudders, and breaking a mast in every ocean on earth.

John's first book was *Icebergs, Port and Starboard*, his story about racing around the world on *Fisher & Paykel*, *New Zealand* in the 1989 Whitbread Race. He was the sole American racing with a boatload of Kiwis for nine months and 33,000 miles, right around the world. He describes sailing through storms, blizzards, icebergs in the Southern Ocean, and through the hot, windless doldrums. There are moments of terror punctuated with funny incidents. But most of all is the respect and the bond that grows between the crewmen as the race goes on.

His second book is *Sailing with Scoundrels and Kings, A Lifetime of Boating*, in which John recounts his adventures sailing and racing boats on all the world's oceans. He describes learning to sail in small dinghies in Southern California, sailing in Hawaii and Tahiti, and racing many Transpac Races from Los Angeles to Honolulu. He tells about crossing the Atlantic to sail with the King of Norway and racing from Buenos Aires to Rio de Janeiro. Then there are the two Whitbread Round the World Races. The book is non-stop action and filled with hilarious stories and unforgettable characters.

Our Review

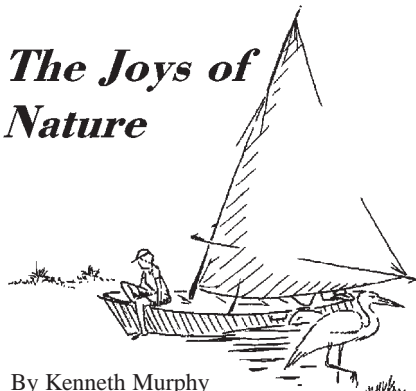
Reviewed by David Binger

Mr. Jourdane is a racing sailor of vast experience and, as one learns from his resume, he is a navigator of considerable talent. A writer, however, he is not. This book would have been much better if it had been an "as told to" (Joseph Conrad, for instance). The Publisher, bless him, sent along a sample sheet of nice things people have said about it, such as that it is "a remarkable history of brave (?) colorful voyages." Nah! Mr. Jourdane has raced across the Pacific, the Atlantic, around the world, across the Great Lakes, in toto, about 300,000 miles over 'most anything that's wet, and that's a lot.

Unfortunately, his tales are mostly laundry lists of sail changes, boat mates, beers drunk (lots), masts lost, glam babes and matey kings met, meals barfed over the side, boats sailed, and celebs encountered. It is about a mariner's life, but it is dry, oh, so dry, a pedestrian piece (not walking on water, d'y see, but plodding along at a slow, lumpy pace). There are typos enough to please the editor in all of us and travelogues without end that tell the reader very little of any place the author takes us, with the exception of bars. In short, do not look for descriptive excellent, convincing dialogue, pulse-pounding sea stories, character development, or any other mark of a skilled writer.

Well folks, now that I have dumped on this poor guy, let it be said that a hardcore ocean racer may find things of interest in the book. Jourdane has sailed the ocean blue, in a fine array of first class sailboats, and he will name them for you. If any reader has sailed aboard or against any of these, it could be interesting. The author has indeed been an important part of many important races, and a winner, too. Let us not take that away from him. My advice, if you don't actually have to pay for this book, you may find it rewarding.

The Joys of Nature



By Kenneth Murphy

Spring Song of the Chickadee



My love of the chickadee's song stems from a winter backpacking trip. It was a snowy February and I was walking among rhododendron in the Otter Creek Wilderness Area in West Virginia. It was very cold and the snow was like powder that made a squeaking sound as I walked. I had never seen rhododendron so tall, they were more like trees than bushes. It was a dull, cold day and my spirit was rather subdued. I bumped against one of the tree-like 'dendrons and a cascade of snow fell right on top of my head, with a considerable amount of the powdery stuff finding its way down the back of my neck. My spirits sank lower and I felt sorry and alone. Certainly the prospect of bedding down at night in zero degree weather in a little one-man tent has something to do with it. My king-sized bed and warm home came to mind, my spirit hitting bottom. Then came the chickadees, I didn't see them at first but their song surrounded me. I stopped and listened for a long while, trying to breathe as softly as I could.

I didn't know it at the time but they were singing their spring song, a three-syllable whistle some say repeats their name "chick-a-dee," but many prefer to think they're really singing, "Hey sweetie!" Their lilting song was in strong contrast to my negative mood. These little birds sounded so happy, with not a care in the world. It seemed like they were telling me to "get over it buddy." How could these little birds seem so carefree in such a cold and dreary environment? Of course, I had no idea how they lived and survived in such cold. They are such small things, having a weight of 10 grams, about equal to two quarters. I did not know they grow extra feathers in the winter and that their metabolism increases, with a heart rate of 600 beats a minute, keeping their bodies at 104 degrees Fahrenheit even when the air temperature

drops well below zero. They need lots of food to keep up such a high metabolism. I finally saw movement in the dead weeds along the path. The chickadees were busy picking frozen seeds from stalks of long-dead plants. Considerate, I thought, and it struck me that without those seeds the birds would not be there and I would not be getting their message.

I understand that during wintery nights the chickadees conserve energy by finding some sort of shelter, then turning down their body heat, and slowing down their hearts until the next day.

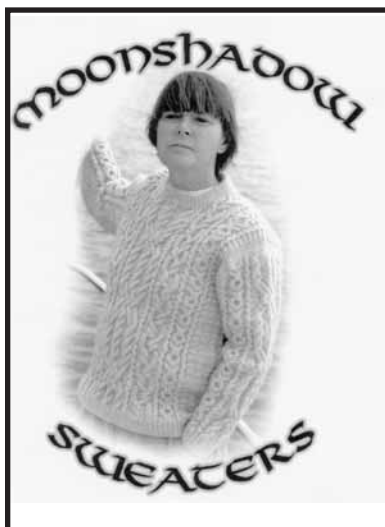
Their sweet singing was magical. I began to feel better right away. Our human song is inferior to a bird's. Our voice box sits on top of our trachea. We do quite well when we talk, but we cannot compete with a bird's song. This is partly because a bird's voice box is at the lower part of the trachea where the two lung branches come together. The sound producing equipment is very different, giving a bird a distinct advantage. This includes the fact that there are two sets of vibrating membranes where the two lung branches come together, each controlled sep-

arately, allowing two distinct sounds to emanate from the bird simultaneously.

Farmyard kids have known about the lower placement of a bird's voice box because when their dad cuts off the head of a chicken for dinner the chicken's body will run around the yard for a while still squawking. Farmyard kids sure know interesting stuff, being so close to nature.

Anyway, what got me going on bird songs was the realization that, in spring, birds start using stronger, more extended songs. They are so different from their winter songs that people think there's a new bird in their yard, when really it's just the same old yard birds like song sparrows changing their tune to alert their rivals of their presence and to attract the neighborhood ladies. This change in tune occurs mostly in late February and into March. Chickadees, on the other hand, start singing their "Hey sweetie" songs even earlier, early enough to get this boater's spirit back on track. Now I have to get some paint for my boat for spring is nearly here!

Contributions to this column should be emailed to Ken Murphy at kgmurphy@comcast.net



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"On your mark!" Bob Yorke lights off his cannon to start the day's adventure.



Looking Back On Winter Past

By Barry Donahue
Photos by Barry Donahue, *Cape Cod Voice*

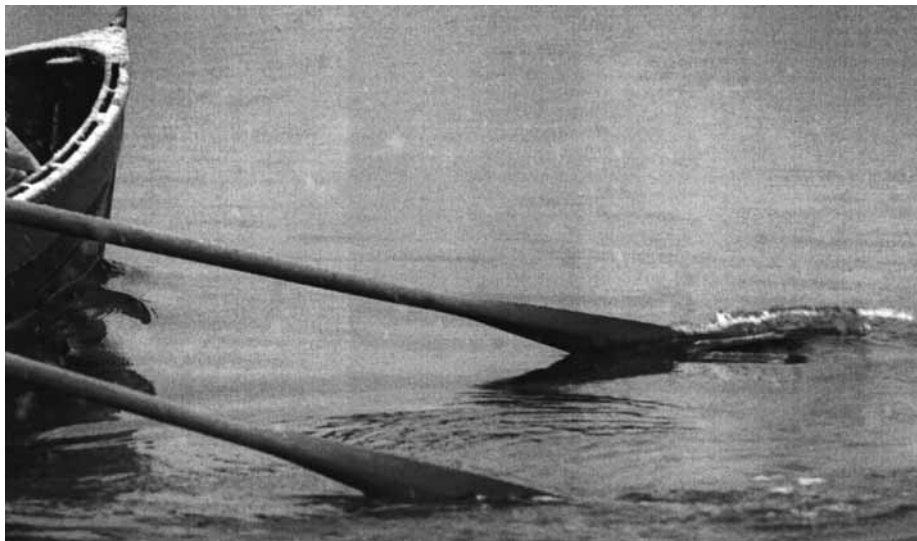
The Cape Cod Viking Rowing Club has been gathering in mid-December at the town landing in Osterville, Massachusetts, on Cape Cod's south coast, for almost 20 years for a good time and a good pull. They're like the postal carriers, they deliver in rain or shine, sleet or snow.

Some years the beach has been crowded with 15-20 pulling boats with owners and crews talking and laughing on the beach near the Wianno Club. Other years they have started off in the big heavy dories leading to break the ice on West Bay before the lighter boats pushed off to follow. Still others have been like last December, with just three boats and five aboard heading out into mist and snow.

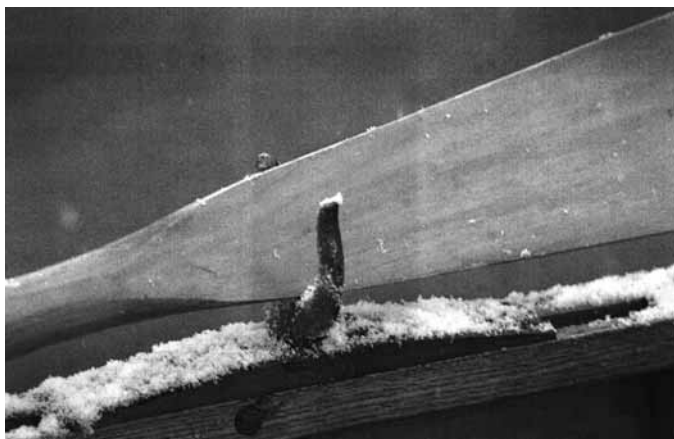
As the boats were launched off the beach, "Stroke Oar" Bob Yorke pulled out his secret weapon, a small deck cannon that barked over the quiet bay in the early morning, probably awakening much of Osterville.

The pull to Sampson's Island was rewarded with a break for coffee and home-made cookies brought by Judy Yorke. This helped everyone finish the circumnavigation of what the charts call "Grand Island," known locally as "Oyster Harbor."

Same time, same place next year... and that's not weather permitting!



The day's row begins with the first pull on the oars.



The look of the day, snow gathers on the deck, gunwales and oarlocks of Bob Yorke's pulling boat.



Bob and Judy Yorke smiling happily through the snowflakes.



Steve and Peggy Woll pull off the beach while beyond them Steve Whittlesey is underway in his Adirondack guideboat.





Just Thinking of Summer

By Barry Donahue

Cape Cod Viking Pete Corbett taking a nap in his Bolger designed paddle/sail boat at Namaquoit Point on Little Pleasant Bay in Orleans, Massachusetts.

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Lake Powell, having been reduced to such pitiful proportions that motorboats nearly covered the entire superficie thereof (possibly I exaggerate), our guide and guru, Kokopelli, betook himself southward to Lake Mojave, next in the string of Colorado River reservoirs below Mead. Mojave is a long, narrow impoundment with a wide part in the middle, much like, as one of our group remarked, a snake with a rabbit in mid transit.

Since Mojave has relatively little storage capacity, at least compared to Mead and Powell, the Californians don't bother to suck it down like the others. It was, in fact, only 3'-4' below full pool. It lacks the dramatic cliffs and slickrock of Powell but is not without charm. The lake occupies what appears to be a rift valley with considerable elevations on both sides. As a result, the wind is either out of the north or south, alternating on a short-term basis. Thus one may go with the flow assured of an easy ride back.

Last fall, when the sorry state of Powell thwarted our run to Hite and the weather dumped on us, there was sentiment for something earlier and with more water. As this year's late September date approached the distance, compounded by pump shock, had some of the normally steadfast Kokonauts squirming in their sea boots. An added attraction of Mojave was its proximity to SoCal and therefore a chance to visit with some of our brethren among the Scuzzbums. As it turned out, Kim Apel, with his long red canoe, was the only one of these worthies to appear.

Upon arrival at Cottonwood Cove (some 20 miles downhill from Searchlight, Nevada) I ran right into our stalwart Idaho representative, he of the forward facing oars, Ron Roberts. Speaking of Idaho, I was so fortunate as to make it way north into that rugged and beautiful state to attend Bob Simmons' Pend Oreille Rendezvous in August. Said affair is highly recommended. I'll bet Bob has already filed a report, as he is highly efficient. As evidence of which, soon after I got home came several sheets listing participants with addresses, numbers of boats, people, and lastly, the none too subtle statistic, "one dog too many."

Soon after our arrival at the campground we encountered Chuck Leinweber, the Duckworks man, his lovely wife Sandra, and John Welsford, the designer from New Zealand. Ah, the Kokopelli now becomes that well-known international meet. We sat up until midnight chewing the fat and then mostly listening as Ron and John dug into their motorcycling past. Our Editor should have been there!

Near dusk the Gale wagon with double boats appeared. Last year Tom had a two tier affair with Heather's New York Whitehall above the 18' A Duckah!. Wishing to consolidate things and maybe save a little weight, he cooked up the Van Gogh boat. It's a plywood dory based, paint job and all, on a painting he found on a postcard.

Sunday morn found the Welsfords leaving for an attack on Vegas. Chuck and Sandra, with two kayaks, were off to explore Utah. Kim, who had thought to be late and catch up with us, showed up before we ever got wet. Ron had long since rented a kayak for his son, Soloman, who had flown into Vegas. They, temporarily based at his brother's place, had made several attempts to get the boat without ever finding the guy. This was a lucky break for me as I gained a good crew.

Kokopelli Goes South

By JimThayer

Photographers: Apel, Gale, Hicks, and Staff

Unlike the usual Kokopelli start there was no boatbuilding at the ramp this year. There was, however, rather lengthy unloading as the Kokonauts are not ones to rough it unduly. Once afloat we went with the flow and followed a nice breeze northward. Kim, our local knowledge man, had suggested a gravel beach north and we were soon ensconced thereon. Adults can enjoy a gravel beach because it doesn't blow, stick all over everything, or get in the food. The pail and shovel pair find sand more serviceable but went right to work, undaunted.

Our beach had a perfect curve and a steep berm indicating some wave action. Being wide open to the north with a fetch of several miles gave us a wonderful view. Kim assured me that north winds were unknown in September. He has developed an uncanny ability to predict the weather base on the contrarian principle.

With camp set up and it being still early, all boats went out to play in a nice breeze, about 15 out of the south. Soloman seemed right at home on the helm, allowing me to lounge about and keep a tight grip on my can while fooling with the video.

The Gales had a table with cloth where Heather was at work on an array of veggies while Tom fried tortillas. This team laid on chicken tacos in abundance. The 'nauts are at times, perhaps, a bit light on napery and crystal but have no peers when it comes to chow.

The morning routine was extremely deliberate which allowed Kim time to go sailing while the rest puttered about. Kim has obviously spent a good many evenings engineering accessories for his canoe. After taking out the sliding seat rig, he installed a rather elaborate sailing outfit featuring an Optimist sail. The thing went like gangbusters but insisted on some strenuous hiking.

The wind out of the north was building right along and was pushing up a nice little surf by the time Kim came back and beached at the somewhat sheltered end of the cove. I was anxious to get going before things got any sloppier. I didn't use to worry about getting off a lee shore but them days is gone forever. With Soloman for push, we set off on a port tack but we weren't clawing off. Rather, we looked to be coming ashore right on top of the Girly Boat. The alert beach crew held us off and got us turned around, whereupon we proceeded to repeat the fiasco on starboard. Again, the surf safeties, Tom and Kim, came to the rescue.

I may be slow but I ain't stationary. Two such abject failures got me to wondering if there might be an equipment problem. Sure enough, there was a stone lodged near the top of the centerboard case. It was soon extracted, but how it got there is a mystery. Board down, we were soon on our way. Soloman, our keen-eyed helmsman, made several boards of a mile or so back and forth across the waters, enjoying the snappy breeze. On our last approach to the eastern shore we explored an attractive bight which had, in its far corner, a narrow lead to a nice beach. This bit of local knowledge was to give us grief later on.

This morning we had learned that Soloman had to catch a plane on the morrow.

Therefore, we slanted off southward to be nearer the cars. We wound up at the end of a deep bay where the beach was mostly mud but there was enough firm shore for the boats. The little people made good use of the gunk. There was a nice spreading tree which Kim augmented with a fly. A good thing, too, as the fierce tropical sun was melting normally animated sailors into immobile blobs. Fortunately there was enough life left to work up a little lunch and keep the beverages flowing.

During lunch we were entertained by a most remarkable animal, a sociable rabbit. This critter came running as though bent on attack but pulled up behind a low branch of our tree. A child was dispatched with lettuce, which was disdained at first, but was eaten later on after a course of bread. After supper he came back with two buddies and they engaged in some spirited running and jumping.

The southerly latitude and low elevation combined to give us a blast of late September summer. The afternoon was whiled away with desultory conversation and minimal movement. Except, that is, for Heather, like Tom, a potter. She always brings a project, normally some sort of needlework. This trip she had a pot upon which she was, with meticulous care, incising a pattern with needle-like tools.

After Ron and Kim had laid on supper we pulled up a chair to enjoy a fire. Lately Ron has been bringing fire logs and I had about decided that they were the way to go. They are very long lasting and provide a decent amount of flame. This night's log, however, evidently from a different litter, had apparently been doped with something to produce blue and green flames. It was attractive at first but I began to wonder if it was poisonous. This notion was reinforced by the rank smell of burning crude. Rather than high grade wax, it must have been loaded with asphalt.

The clouds at sundown had been ominous, much like on a previous trip which had turned out badly. Therefore, I rigged a tarp which could be rapidly deployed without leaving the sack. Sometime in the wee hours, when the first cool messengers smote my brow, I sat up and pulled over my impermeable. As I did so I noticed a flurry of activity aboard the VG Boat where the Gale parental cohort was bunked. Come morning we learned that Kim had gotten up and rigged his fly. The rain was only a few splatters but it kept coming back to keep us on edge.

We had buried the offensive log at bedtime but wafts of vile petroleum were the first indication of consciousness in the morning. Next came yips and yelps which were plenty loud even though my ears were still in their night case. I assumed it was the kids but they were staring wide-eyed out their door and the shipboard Gales were looking off across the water. The modest beginning quickly grew to an indescribable racket suggesting tormented souls from the underworld. Apparently a pack of coyotes was berating a loner on the other side.

Ron and Soloman got an early start for the real world. After breakfast the rest of us set out northward on a close reach which became a beat as the wind built. Our goal was a cove with some largish trees where Tom and Kim were settled in when I arrived, after stalking an egret. Heather had dropped behind as the wind headed. Lunch and a little napping found us once again on a lee shore as the wind got into its afternoon mode.



Chris' trimaran.



Van Gogh Boat, *Nina*, *Girly Boat*.



Gale outfit.



Dr. Gale doing extraction.



Heather with *Girly Boat*.

Kim adjusts sail rig.



I rolled in a few turns and, recalling previous problems, checked the board. Stuck! Levering with a canoe paddle broke the grip. Nothing worked until Tom grabbed the Danforth. Tom held the shank while Kim whanged away on the head, breaking several rocks in the process. It finally came loose. The rule, of course, is don't let a centerboard boat wash around on a beach. The best idea is to scrupulously avoid lee shores. It occurs to me now (and I've been doing this for many years) that since my centerboard is offset to starboard I should always lie port side to. Well, live and learn, an inefficient process for a slow learner.

Willie elected to ride with me and with help from the shore crew we shot away for the previously discovered cove straight across the lake eastward. We had more wind than we needed so it was a quick trip. Tom was not far behind. Coming in, the cove didn't look right and, when I sailed into the corner where I expected to find my hidden lead, I found myself in a blind pocket. Another lesson, with wind aft and limited room, it pays to be cautious. I wound up in the bushes.

Once again, Tom to the rescue. We pulled her out and awaited the imminent arrival of the rowing boats. The rowing pair went off south to scout and Kim was soon back to report no sign of our lost harbor but that the next cove was perhaps better than our present situation.

I reached out on starboard and, missing two tacks without trying to find out why, gybed over and ran into the next cove. There was good beach but, alas, no mud for the kiddies. By way of compensation there was a marvelous "hidden room" in the dense tamarisk.

We had informed Ron of our intended whereabouts and he had confidently assured us that he would find us. The afternoon was pattered away without sign of him. Finally the boys decided to mount a search mission. The Van Gogh boat set off downwind with a well-reefed windsurfer sail, confident that the little motor would fetch them back.

With gathering dusk our concern grew and we went to a nearby point to keep a lookout, Heather with glasses and I with the x20 videocam, but we couldn't spot anything. The video is great for long distance but as the

light faded the sky became relatively much lighter than the water and befuddled the electronics. Thus searching the horizon, glasses have the advantage.

Somewhat apprehensive, we returned to camp and got a beacon fire going. We were getting definitely concerned when the faint sound of a motor wafted in. There being more chicken in the cooler, the Gales whipped up an encore round of burritos. Tom and Kim, understandably tuckered, bagged up while Heather and I babied the fire with tamarisk twigs until the moon came over the hill. Next morn as we were packing up the ever cheerful Ron came rowing in.

This little episode illuminates a common problem. What would he do if? This is the question whenever one party waits for another who is perceived to be late. Perhaps the missing party doesn't consider himself late but merely reacting to a course of events over which he has little control. If he believes himself to be truly late, should he consider how the waiting party might decide to alter the agreed upon plan?

In the instant case, Ron was due back at the ramp, probably mid-afternoon, but he has a brother in Vegas? His rig is not a sharp sailer but he is very strong on the oars. Ah, but there is a fierce headwind and his outfit has a lot of windage. The conclusion, he may need a tow. Is he in danger? Probably not, for he is a resourceful fellow and has his kit with him. If he is out there, can he be found?

So now, as often happens, the problem is compounded. Are Tom and Kim okay? Suppose the little motor packs up? They are both strong rowers but what about a broken oar? In short, no real worry but a certain unease. As it turns out, Tom's rudder broke on the way down and they steered by dragging one oar then the other. In fact, he used this method the rest of the week, finding it more practical than working an oar over the transom.

All this by way of cautioning myself as much as you folks. Of course, one can get bogged down in the endless permutations of "what if" and just elect to play it by ear. Failing all else, one can always fall back on our old hunting group's guiding principle, "Lets do something, even it's wrong" (with a Texas accent).

Our happy group, reunited, set off southward to explore the rabbit in mid snake. Kim, hearing the sirens of SoCal, bid goodbye and disappeared over the horizon. The Gale fleet had business at the marina. Ruby was crewing for me and Ron was close behind. I had thought we would meet the Gales for lunch, but no sign. Ruby ate up most of Ron's mandarin oranges. We fed some birds, finished our modest lunch, and then sat back to enjoy the shade.

The short period of inactivity gave Ruby time to reflect and she suddenly realized that her daddy was not present and, moreover, had probably disappeared forever. This precipitated great heaving sobs and cries of "I want my daddy!" with metronomic regularity and wavering tonality. It was truly heartrending but failed to affect my granite ticker. I think Ron was a little uncomfortable and we soon shoved off.

A short way south we spied the Gale fleet making out from shore and Ruby was soon saved. We tacked south against a light wind as Ron rowed the shoreline. We checked several coves which promised shelter but lacked shade, even landing a party at one place for a good look. Finally Tom followed a

deep lead to near its end where he discovered a carpeted launch slope. A stone enclosure, now dry, and a large adjacent clearing with fire pit suggested a hot spring or possibly pagan rites. Everybody got into swimming and we whacked the big Wassermelon.

I, being the supper guy, lugged the stove and gear up to the clearing where Ron had erected his cardboard table. As I looked around, contemplating my next move, I became aware of a buzz in the air and a prickling of the skin. A glance at my arm revealed hordes of mosquitoes pushing and shoving for position. The faint clacking of proboscises as they spared for choice veins furthered my unease. Grabbing my gear, I beat a hasty retreat to Tom's table in the bright sun at water's edge.

While whipping up supper I commented that I would have to put up a tent to keep the buggers at bay. Apparently there had been an undercurrent of talk about the problem and the mention of Thayer actually putting up a tent completely unnerved them. It was decided to vacate the premises as soon as we had eaten.

Heather and Ron got away with a short lead and we followed, *Nina* towing behind the VG Boat with the little motor. It was soon dark but the marina lights showed the way. On close approach, unlit houseboats loomed out of the dark with startling suddenness. Heather hit the ramp at the same time and Ron was only a couple minutes behind. The campground was nearly deserted as we burned a fake log and waited for the moon.

The Yahoo Bunch

Last summer, via the computerized ether, I was contacted by another group of lost souls wanting to sail Powell. There was talk of a joint effort with the Kokonauts but they concluded to do their own thing quite a lot earlier. Always on the lookout for friendly sail, the Gale bunch and I joined them near Bullfrog. Turned out to be a good bunch with an eclectic collection of exotic craft. Their affair this year overlapped the end of the Kokopelli so we decided to drop in on them.

A poor route decision and a wrong turn put me at Stanton Creek around noon Friday. The Gales and Ron were there long since. Smith and Hicks, road adverse Kokonauts, were settled in with the folding schooner and

School is everywhere.



Brazen Bandido.



the rowing cruiser. Of course, Smith in attendance, there were roaring campfires. To the distress of Hicks and myself, he has fallen back on mere construction grade scrap.

The Yahoos had chosen a near circular little bay with some stones showing in the middle. As we were to learn, there were a number of unseen stone arms reaching out sort of a stone octopus, if you will. Carefully avoiding this monster, *Nina* set off with a group of intrepid mariners to investigate the scene of a large fire seen the night before on the far shore.

Dewitt had brought along a sea anchor about 2' in diameter. We set about deploying this thing for a test. With sails luffing, *Nina* insisted on making a square drift without enough way to put a strain on the anchor. We could have spent more time working with it, but as it was the test was inconclusive.

The aft end of the centerboard trunk on *Nina* is covered with a piece of plywood which mounts the swiveling cam cleat for the sheet. Ever since the heavy weather at Mojave, water had been coming out from under this cover. I figured that the caulking under it had dried out and resolved to fix it when I got home. It was now squirting enough to require some bailing. Dewitt ran a finger around it and announced a 1/8" crack. Clearly the drywall screws were pulling out and might let go at any moment. The captain shouldn't rely on guests to figure these things out. I'm going to put a horse on the aft deck for next season.

Along the same lines, the tiller is held in the rudder head by a scrap of small stuff knotted through the part of the tiller which protrudes through the head. Solomon pulled it out a couple of times. It's disconcerting with a breeze of wind. The piece of line I had grabbed at launch was clearly too small. Same thing happened to Tom on the sea anchor trip. Late Saturday afternoon we ran another tour and coming back in Ron had the helm. On close approach he offered it to me but I assured him he could handle it. Just as he was about to round up, the tiller came free and boom, we were up on the octopus. The moral, fix problems as soon as they as they are detected.

I wasn't the only one with problems. Coming in with a load of tourists, Dewitt's iron plate daggerboard was grabbed by the octopus, producing a dramatic schooner wreck. A party of wreckers was immediately on the scene unrigging and carrying plunder ashore. The hull was careened and it was discovered that the steel plate had cut through the back of the case and on into the hull. Several large blocks of sandstone were broken up driving it back. Cb/db people should sail hard rock country or carry a big hammer.

A noteworthy and encouraging aspect of the Stanton Creek scene was the activity of the small fry. The Gale kids have been in the thick of the family boating since toddler time but now Willie has blossomed. Jack built him a 2/3 copy of his own rowing cruiser. It's the envy of all who see it. Since Heather, Tom, and Grandpa all row, Willie doubtless thinks it's perfectly normal. At Starvation he was a bit tentative but now he is really into it.

Kellen Hatch had his two little boys there with a Mouseboat apiece. It is a simple boat but seems to sail well. The kids were having fun and covering a lot of lake. Kellan has a dandy write-up about this father/son project on Chuck's Duckworks site.

Everybody was looking for Dave Hahn



Willie with Hatchlings, Evan and Elliot (Octopus watching).

and his new Picara. This boat has been on the verge of completion for a couple of years now. He was headed for Starvation last spring but encountered some rather involved automotive issues. When I got home from the Koko there was a two-page, blow-by-blow, one thing leads to another account of the indignities visited upon him by a converted farm trailer. And him an engineer! I have accused Dave of making up, or at least embellishing, some of his disaster narratives but, having wrestled considerable jackleg rolling stock myself, I recognized a certain verisimilitude in his account. Well, next time for sure. If I ever actually see this boat in the water I will write a glowing account, even if it sinks.

We had watched with interest as some young fella eased a Greyhound-sized motor home down the other side of our hill. This, at the end of what a sign warned was a four wheel drive road. We were rather surprised to see him come back up and head on out. On

the way home I saw this outfit hunkered down on the highway, evidently having suffered a serious failure of the running gear. At least he had all the comforts of home for what would be a long wait.

There were a number of interesting activities at Stanton, like Tom's dory packing Guinness record attempt, Jack's cabana gathering, Bruce's runaway traffic barrier boat, Chris' super trimaran, great bonfires, and so on. But I'll leave that for Sandra or one of the other Yahoos.

Dewitt and I met the Gales at Thin Man for lunch and stamped finis on another great Kokopelli. Not to panic! There is a video. Two glorious hours of guys, gals, and kids living the gay carefree life of the beach cruiser. Gripping drama, shipwreck, and much, much more. Rush \$18.50 cash, check or money order to: Video, Grand Mesa Boatworks LLC, 15654 57-1/2 Rd., Collbran, CO 81624.

The Big Picture symbolizes the challenge faced by mothers in safely leading their children, through calms and storms, past shoals, across the waters of childhood, to the higher ground of happy and fulfilling adulthood.



Punta Baja: Low Point and High Adventure

This next day was probably the most memorable of the trip, again it was fear that made it unforgettable. It started fine, we sailed forth on a repeat of yesterday's north breezes and passed under the very steep cliffs and mountains south of Punta Santa Ana. The big northern swells were still rolling and crashing dramatically along the shore's rugged rocks, shooting spouts of spray high in the air. We made 10 miles and reached an area of lower shores and sloping bajadas where we were planning to stop before conquering the last line of cliffs surrounding Cabo Tres Virgenes. We passed a nice cobble beach with some abandoned fish shacks on it which looked like a landing spot, but we decided to push on. Mistake.

We proceeded to round Punta Baja, a series of low cobble points, planning on finding a nice beach beyond here. Well, the waters off of humble Punta Baja were some of the ugliest we've had the displeasure of sailing in. The combination of the big swells, tidal currents, shoal water, and a rising north wind made for chaos. The 4' swells were no longer in rows, but chaotic. Where they constructively interfered with each other, the water was piled in mountainous cones. You can say that I'm exaggerating, and I didn't get out my yardstick, but these mountains of water were every bit of 7' tall if not more. We tossed about like a cork, taut sails jerking about like little hankies. Fortunately, Gerry Cunningham's yachting information warned us of ugly water here so at least we weren't completely surprised.

At least the waves were far enough apart that they didn't threaten to capsize, they were just scary to us landlubbers. After seeing that it was getting worse rather than better, and worrying that the wind would really start to build, we scoped the shore for landing spots. Nothing doing, just huge basketball-sized cobbles everywhere. We anchored twice while I swam ashore, only to confirm it was impossible to land. Tossing around back in the boat we decided to round the next low point in hopes of a beach beyond. We furled the sails and turned on the motor, not burdened with sailing purism we just wanted to

The Art Of Beach Cruising

Observations from a Three-Week Baja Odyssey

Part 3

By John Sperry

get our butts off the water. Well, a half hour further on and another swim to shore and still nothing doing. And the cliffs leading to Cabo Tres Virgenes were starting. Now what?

We had two choices, go for rounding the cape or go way back to the nice beach with the fish shacks. One glance down towards the cape was enough to make up our minds, stomach-churning water all the way and a shore all cliffs. So we fired up the motor and chugged slowly and uncomfortably back against wind, waves, and current around all the points we had just conquered. Once we reached the cobble beach by the fish shacks, landing looked like it might be a challenge with the surf. Fortunately the beach was steep with a narrow surf zone.

Once safely on shore with *Loon* dry docked beside us we just sat for a couple of hours in our chairs, eventually eating lunch and equilibrating. It had been probably two hours of very tense reconnoitering out there in pretty sloppy water. Had the wind ever really fired up (as it did the very next day) we could have been in much more serious trouble. Fortunately we both stayed calm and patient throughout the ordeal. Panic and yelling does no good at all.

The lesson we learned here was to land sooner rather than later in unfamiliar and challenging territory, we should have quit while we were ahead when we first passed this beach, thus saving Punta Baja and beyond for the calm conditions of early morning. Of course, a bigger boat might have provided a larger margin of safety, but having never capsized or swamped in *Loon*, it is hard to say what our margin of safety actually was. And, there is the likely trade-off between seaworthiness and ease of landing and hauling, a bigger boat might end up com-

mitting one to weathering more serious seas as opposed to watching them from one's folding chair on a beach. The rest of this eventful day was taken up in a fantastic hike up a wild canyon snaking into the mountains.

Of course, we were full of apprehension about rounding Cabo Tres Virgenes, having glimpsed its approach under less than auspicious conditions. The next morning we were up and on the water extra early. No wasting time on light land breezes this morning, we fired up the Mercury and chugged at a steady 4-5mph right from the get-go. The swells were still on, but were flattened out and we gratefully put Punta Baja finally behind us and eagerly rounded the truly impressive Cabo Tres Virgenes under still calmish conditions. We sensed signs of unrest in the air, however, and with an eye over our shoulder to the north, kept the motor on to round one more point, passing beneath imposing La Reforma that towered above the cape. Here we finally saw panga boats and fishermen from Santa Rosalia, we'd made it back to civilization.

We turned off the motor and sailed into the broad cobble beach of Punta Arena, deciding to camp here so that we could jump past Santa Rosalia and associated congestion in one day tomorrow. No sooner had we landed than the wind rose to a *Loon*-eating 30+mph out of the north, chasing the fishermen home and filling the sea with whitecaps. It was only 9:30am and we felt like geniuses, rounding the cape before the weather hit by the judicious and practical use of the out-board. Had we tried to sail today, the rising wind would have caught us smack off the cape, nasty! We spent the day hiking, botanizing, and washing clothes.

Coda and Conclusion

The remainder of the trip, the last five days to Punta Chivato, saw the return of the mellow Baja that we enjoy the most. We could relax again. We had wonderful sailing breezes without adventures, good fishing, and peaceful, scenic camps. Aside from garbage-ridden shores near Santa Rosalia and San Bruno, the landscape continued to be enthralling. Highlights included the capture of a sierra, a mackerel-like fish that, when lightly grilled with its spotted skin on, won the "meal-of-the-trip" award. Creamy white flesh that melted in your mouth.

The last day, rounding Punta Chivato itself, was appropriately perfect with excellent fishing (including the landing of a needlefish!) and great sailing. As hoped, our Bronco was where we wanted it to be, parked at the Four Star hotel by the ramp. We looked longingly south to the mountains of Punta Concepci, the beginning of another wonderful stretch of coast that we have previously sailed down to Loreto. But all things must come to an end. Although we camped at the beach that night, we did visit the hotel for a wonderful three-course meal on the stone verandah, just the two of us.

After three weeks of the sail-camping life, we were thoroughly attuned to the rhythms of sea, wind, and sun. The sound of waves was ever in our ears. A wonderful existence with the day's only task being the most enjoyable one of taking a little sail down coast a ways and finding another nice spot to stop. The length of the voyage was important, three weeks allowed us to adjust completely to this other way of life and allowed a sense of expansive timelessness.

La Reforma looming 4,265' and scarcely three miles inland.



The experience got under my skin so that I found myself dreaming of sailing every night for a week and a half after returning home.

The trip did have its share of adventure and challenge, more so than our other trips further south. This was owing to the rowdier weather of this October and also the stronger tidal surges and remoteness of the coast as compared to the region south of Santa Rosalia. *Loon* was equal to the task but on the two occasions described we got involved in bigger water than I think she should have been out in. On those days, at least, we would have liked to have been in a higher-volume boat, as long as we could still land and haul it easily. The old size vs. weight and draft trade-off. But for the time being we'll stick with *Loon* and just keep a weather eye out to minimize trouble.

For someone really seeking adventure, doing the trip without a motor would definitely increase the challenge. Although we didn't use it much, our little Mercury provided important assistance at a few critical junctures. What's the next trip down there? Well, there're several big islands that could require weeks to thoroughly circumnavigate and our trip from Muleto to Loreto was so beautiful we might have to do it again.

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Cape Cod, 1904: Weather permitting, nurse Lilly Nickerson usually took her lunch on the beach overlooking Hyannis Harbor, a stone's throw from the Heaven's View Rest Home where she worked. This day she gazed across the channel and watched a familiar lone shell fisherman heave a bushel barrel of soft shell clams onto the gunwale of his skiff, toss an oar out of the way, then lower the clams into the bilge. Moments later the hollow thunk of the tossed oar reached her ear as he stepped into his clam hole to resume digging.

Stabbing his clam fork into the firm sand on the far shore, Bert Peckham had gotten so he counted on her being there and imagined he even knew her. She was as good as a clock and he allowed himself to daydream about her leaning down and kissing him as he dug. He was a shy man resigned to being single and lonely, but he couldn't stop wishing he knew the fetching girl who so often seemed to watch him work.

One blustery October day Lilly waved at the clammer across the way. When he waved back, she called out, "Can I buy some of your clams?"

Bert heard her voice, but her words got swallowed by the wind. He was thrilled that she'd actually noticed him. He cupped his hand to his ear and shouted back, "Cain't heah yah!"

She tried again to no avail, so Bert climbed into his boat and rowed across the harbor, his back to her. By the time he was within hailing distance his heart was fluttering from his shyness. He stood and turned toward her, rowing from a standing position. "What is it you were saying?" he shouted.

Lilly stood from her bench and approached the water's edge. "Can I buy a dozen of your clams?" she called out.

"No ma'am," he called back.

Lilly was a little shocked. And she was surprised at how handsome the clammer was. He looked older than she'd imagined, perhaps 40 or more. She'd assumed from a distance he was very young man. Funny how the mind plays tricks, she thought.

She could see he could handle a boat with skill and fluid grace. She was reminded of her late husband, first mate on a schooner taken by a guano explosion during a northeaster eight years ago that very month. He and seven men were never seen again. A week after their expected arrival thousands of charred grapefruit washed ashore up and down Cape Cod. Their schooner was carrying guano and grapefruit. The boys at the tavern speculated that the northeaster stirred up St. Elmo's Fire that lit methane bubbling up from the guano like a baby's burp shaken loose by a slap on the back. Kaboom and *Corpo Sancto*.

Bert grinned now as he approached Lilly. He could see the surprise in the crinkle of her forehead. She was a handsome woman, he thought. From a distance she'd looked like just a girl, but she wasn't. Not at all. Part of him was disappointed because she was surely married, part of him was relieved because she was surely married. "But you can have as many as you want, ma'am. Enough for the whole family," he said more softly now, pulling onto the shore and stepping onto the firm sand, dropping his anchor.

"A dozen will do fine," she said, smiling at his refusal to take her money. "I'm a first mate's childless widow and I don't eat much."

Romance In a Whitehall Skiff

Nautical Fiction by Peter Owens
Ceramic Sculpture by the Author



"Quahogs? Steamers? Or both?" he asked, nervous again because she was a widow, a top mate's no less.

"Quahogs!" she said brightly. "And do you have any oysters?"

"I do, indeed. I'll give you a dozen of each, steamers, too, and if you don't want 'em, drop 'em off at the rest home. Someone always takes 'em."

"I work there," she said. "I'm a nurse. Call me Lilly," she said smiling, holding out her hand.

Bert's hand was cold, wet, and muddy. He wiped it as best he could on his wool trousers and shook her warm little hand, trying to be gentle. "Pleased to meet you," Bert said.

Like many fishermen, Bert believed in omens. A few days after he met Lilly Nickerson, a northeaster roared up the coast. It howled for three days. It was the worst storm since the one that took her husband. She didn't eat lunch on the beach those three days. Bert missed her greatly. He was becoming infatuated with her. He feared he had lost her. It didn't occur to him in this addled state of mind that she didn't want to get soaked or frozen in the horrible storm and thus ate at the rest home, enjoying her clam sandwiches in sheltered warmth.

Bert worked anyway and on the third day waded out into the choppy harbor and hauled in a swamped Whitehall skiff, a lovely pulling boat built for gentlemen, undoubtedly torn loose by the storm and set adrift from God knows where. Bert bailed the boat and towed her home. Being an honest man, he registered with the harbor master for salvage rights and paid for a notice in the *Hyannis Patriot* describing the boat in case she had an owner. Meanwhile, he went to work each day rowing his old clamming skiff, not knowing that Lilly Nickerson was taken down by a fever and confined to bed.

No one claimed the Whitehall skiff, so Bert repaired her leaks and caulked her with cotton. He had thought the boat had been an omen, a gift from Davey Jones that would

allow him to give Lilly Nickerson a proper rowing tour during which she could enjoy her lunch. But she had stopped coming to the beach, so Bert thought maybe the skiff was a message from her drowned husband that Bert was no gentleman and not worthy of a mate's widow. Winter came, as did flows of sea ice and a string of northeasters that dumped seven feet of snow along shore, burying Lilly Nickerson's bench at Hyannis Harbor. Bert took a job in the boat yard repair shop until the weather broke.

It was the worst winter of the new century, but in mid-April the sun came out and it turned warm. Bert worked in his shirtsleeves. He'd long since cleaned out every clam across the way from Lilly's empty bench and found another honey spot off Great Island two miles past Lilly's beach. When he rowed past her vacant bench on a rare day the sun came out, Bert was working a morning tide so he missed her arrival. And she was deeply disappointed, too, thinking he had moved on to better spots. She lingered after her lunch but he didn't row past again until four and by then she was long gone.

The boys at the shop knew many things about the yachting set and told Bert to sell the Whitehall for twice its value. So upon their advice he began towing it on his way to Great Island. He fashioned a large sign that he inserted on a pole in the rudder gudgeon, "Whitehall Yacht Tender and Pulling Skiff, \$100," the sign said.

Bert had begun to forget about Lilly Nickerson and then one week en route to working a mid-day tide he heard her call out to him as he rowed the outgoing out of Hyannis Harbor.

"Mr. Peckham," she called, hurrying to the shoreline, sandwich in hand. "I'm so pleased to see you again."

Bert turned and looked over his shoulder. He was so glad to see her, his oar popped its lock and he had to fumble to recover it. By the time he had reset himself his boats had turned toward her and so he kept rowing right into shore. He was glad he'd bathed and shaved that morning and when he shook her hand this time he wouldn't give offense.

"Now why would you be selling that lovely boat, Mr. Peckham?" she asked, wandering back to the Whitehall and brushing her fingers along its gunwale. "Why if I had \$100, I would snap it up in a heartbeat." She was so excited to see him again that her mood brightened into a girlish giggle.

"I wouldn't sell you a boat you didn't try first," Bert said. "So would you like a ride in your new Whitehall skiff?" he asked. Before she even answered he'd borrowed the oars from his clam skiff and tossed the anchor into the sand. He set the oars in the Whitehall's forward locks and held out his hand to help her.

"Well, I don't have \$100, Mr. Peckham," she said, placing her left boot over the gunwale onto the stern thwart. "But you can take me for a ride."

"Let me help you here, ma'am," he said, grasping her waist in both hands and lifting her into the skiff. "We'll talk about price if the boat pleases you."

She could feel the strength in his two hands. She felt feather light but sat quickly before she rocked the boat and fell in a clumsy heap.

Bert pushed off and climbed in, careful to nudge the oars up and out without touching her thighs with the blades. He pulled

hard, rocking her backward, causing her to tighten her grip on the gunwale as the boat darted forward. He checked over his shoulder every third pull, but otherwise had a full, close-up view of Lilly Nickerson's creamy face and slender neck tensing with each pull.

"This is lovely," she said with surprise in her voice. She was startled by the speed as they rushed past the naked black ribs of an ancient brig sunk by a hurricane, a relic now mostly buried by a half century of drifting sand and mud.

"This here's a fine boat, ma'am," Bert said.

"But I don't have a place for a boat..."

"Oh, I can take care of that for you,"

Bert said, peeking back over his shoulder. "I got a slip in a boat house."

"And I don't row myself," she said in a voice fading as reality set in.

"Well I can do that. Sail her, too. Or I can teach you, or you could hire a man," he said, his voice trembling now with hope.

"I would like that so much," she said.

"Which?" he asked tipping forward, noting the concern furrowing her brow.

"Well, for heaven's sake, how kind of you. I would say the former," she said with the sympathetic smile she often reserved for her most distressed patients.

"Which is the former?"

"You. I would hire you to row me about," she said brightly. She loved the surge of the boat as he set the oars and pulled. The waves licked quietly at the soft pine hull.

"Then it's done," he said. "You've got yourself a boat, ma'am."

"But I have no money," she protested, her mood sinking again.

"I'll give her to you, free and clear," he said. Bert pulled harder and harder as the excitement rose and the fear she would say no churned in his belly. He stopped looking back over his shoulder and fixed his eyes on two half-moon creases on her creamy neck.

"I really can't," she said mournfully.

"It's your boat, ma'am. It's done."

"But..."

"I found this boat and I'm giving her to you for what I paid. No less and no more. And if you cook me one batch of stew a month, I'll row you to the end of the rainbow if that's where you want to go," he said. He was panting now, sweat trickling down his temples. He stopped and took a breath.

"In the future, we don't need to go quite so fast," she said with a grateful grin.


Bert held the oar blades above the water, his wrists crossed over his heart. He smiled back at her, relief washing over him like a cool and gentle breeze. He gazed at her with growing admiration as she looked out over the harbor waters. Despite the hot sun he could see goosebumps on her arms. They glided with the tide, shoreline willows sprouting sweet new yellow-green leaves whose shadows turned to shimmering gold in the dark water.

"There are few greater pleasures in this life than the first day you own your own boat," he said quietly.

She turned to him, "Indeed," she said. "Better than hot stew on a freezing night curled up by a warm fire?" she asked with a quiet smile.

"No, Ma'am. You got me there," he blurted, color rising warmly up his face, hoping he hadn't given offense, wondering if by some distant chance she might be flirting? Couldn't be, he thought quickly to himself, not a mate's widow with a lowly clammer.

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We were on our way back from four delightful days camping in the interior of Killarney Park, Ontario. My friend and I stood with our wives on the small dock at the east end of George Lake. It was midday. The water was calm, with hardly a shimmer, and the sky was a beautiful, nearly cloudless blue. It had been four days like this, very warm and dry, hot enough for a swim in the icy water every afternoon. My friend looked at the calm water and said, "The bane of the canoeist is wind in the face," a quote for which neither of us remembered the origin, and which seemed totally out of place on such a day.

But I had shared with him the story of the year before. My wife and I had come to Killarney and set up on a site we had reserved in the drive-in campground at George Lake. We had a prime site, near the water with a good view. And it was a good campground, with reasonably well-spaced sites to minimize the usual normal activity noise. Still, we are not campground type people. After two days we traded in our prime site for a chance at finding a peaceful remote spot in the interior. Camping in the "interior" meant putting everything in the canoe and paddling and portaging until we reached the area where we reserved a site, then hoping to find a vacant campsite that suited us. Specific sites cannot be reserved, but our reservation meant that something within a specific area would be available. We were headed to Killarney Lake, happy that there was space available for a couple of days without having made prior reservations.

The next morning we packed our gear, put it all in the canoe, secured the van, and embarked on an 8km paddle with a couple of portages along the way. Weather information was hard to get and not all that reliable in the north, but the day was fine with a light breeze helping us along. Thinking of ourselves as seasoned canoe campers, we had packed light enough that we finally were able to traverse the portages in a single trip. We had been there before and knew the effort was worth it.

Our favorite campsite was not available but we were soon able to find one suitable. We set up camp and enjoyed the rest of the day, only able to see, but not hear, one other

Wind In The Face

By Hugh Groth

campsite. Throughout the evening and the night the voices of the owls and the loons gave us comfort. We had what we came for.

The morning brought cloudy skies, though not especially threatening. I rigged a tarp over our food preparation area in case we had rain, but we kept it pulled back along its ridge-line so it did not obscure the view. And then we did have rain, not in buckets, but now and then all day. We could tell the weather was changing and yet it did not bother us much. We simply set the tarp when it rained and pulled it back as it stopped. We read a little, relaxed, and enjoyed the isolation. During the day the breeze picked up so that by late day the waves on the lake were significant. Our reservation expired the next day so I mentioned that we had better get an early start. Usually the wind dies overnight and we wanted to take advantage of the morning calm even though we could have stayed till midday.

We awoke to a low roar in the treetops. The wind had not died, it had gotten stronger and it was colder. It appeared certain that this was just the beginning of a big blow so we hurriedly packed and shoved off. Our site was in a protected cove near the west end of the lake so the wind blowing over the broad expanse of the lake affected us less than it might have and we had little problem getting to the first portage. The next lake, a rather weedy, small, and well-protected body of water, was quickly traversed even though the wind was coming at us and increasing in velocity. The final portage was short and downhill to a dock at the end of George Lake.

So there we were. As Sigurd Olsen would say, the white horses were galloping down the full expanse of the lake in our direction, their manes tossed into mist by the wind, and the wind carrying the mist back up the small waterfall along side the portage. My wife, wiser than I, suggested that we go back a ways and wait out the wind, even staying another night if need be. But my ego and

stubbornness would not allow it. "We can come up behind that nearby small island, ferry over to the point on the left, and stay close to shore as we paddle back. We'll be fine," I said. The waves were so bad we could barely enter the canoe.

We started out. Thank goodness for the big canoe, nearly 18' long, and the earlier decision to pack light. This kept the cargo well inside the canoe, minimizing our profile and lowering our center of gravity. We could not get to the island and we could not get to the point. There was no choice but to paddle directly into the wind, no turning or we would swamp. Even though the canoe was big, it did not have much depth. This helps in wind resistance, but in those waves we would have been taking green water over the side if the bow veered to the right or left more than a few degrees. We were headed for the middle of the lake.

Both of us were on our knees, paddling for all we were worth. We were barely able to move the canoe forward, keeping the wind about 10 degrees to starboard. Then we allowed the canoe to slide back, rotating the stern so that the wind was about 10 degrees to port. We zig-zagged into the wind and slipped back, slowly moving sideways. We kept paddling this way for a couple of hours, finally making it close to shore and the lee of a prominent rock formation.

We had not swamped but we were not yet out of danger. For more than another hour we paddled hard, staying along the shore in and out of the wind until we rounded the last point and headed south through the channel to the campground and our van. For a while we sat exhausted on the beach, finally loading the canoe on the van and heading home. Next time we would be wiser, better prepared, if there were a next time.

Now here we were again, on the same dock at the east end of George Lake, headed home, and only a year later. Apparently memory softens with time. And we were prepared this time. We had enough food for an extra day if need be, enough clothes, and even had invited another couple to come with us. They were younger and stronger and we could help each other in case of disaster. So now what we had was calm, hot weather. Don't get me wrong. I wasn't objecting.

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Off The Rhumb Line

By Captain Gnat

The story on the *Story*, etc. What's the *Story*? The *Story* is a gaff rigged pinky cat schooner built by Harold Burnham and owned by the Essex (Massachusetts) Shipbuilding Museum. It's a representation of a colonial pinky and it's a wonderful boat.

Off to the WoodenBoat Show. We sailed from Gloucester Harbor about 6am Wednesday, due in Newport by Thursday afternoon. It's over 120 miles, usually upwind, and often dogged by contrary currents from the canal through Buzzards' Bay. We had agreeable north winds and if we hit the canal about the turn of the current we could ride it all the way to New Bedford about 80 miles away. Crew was Sarah Beck, Matt Billey, and myself. I hadn't met Sarah before but she turned out to be great. Matt is a boatbuilder who works on the schooner *Adventure*.

The Eastern sky glowed red, the wind was up our aft, and there were anticrepuscular rays emanating from the clouds to the west. We began motorsailing a rhumbline course straight for the canal entrance about 52 miles away. We were making about 6-1/2kts and at that rate we'd hit the canal about a half hour after the tide turned in our favor. We did hit it just right and rode it at speeds of up to 10-1/2kts over the ground. We transited the canal in just over an hour. That same current carried us down Buzzard's Bay at speeds as high as 8-1/2knots. There were showers down among the Elizabeth Islands and a bit of real rain.

We were docked at the State pier in New Bedford by 7pm. That was the best possible day's run. New Bedford was a great treat and sailing there was something I'd wanted to do for many years. It's a vibrant commercial fishing port. Being tied up there and seeing all the draggers and so forth made memories flood back from my own time spent on fishing draggers. Lying in my berth and hearing the rumble of the diesels going and coming through the night made 30 years seem like yesterday. What a magic place.

During the trip Matt would sometimes begin whistling and that's a trade that he's

particularly horrible at. Each time he'd start Sarah would say, "Come on, Matt, no whistling on the boat. It's bad luck." She was nice about it. Next time he'd start she'd say, "Come on, Matt, no whistling on the boat. It's bad luck." It was puzzling. I wondered why she just didn't assault him with an oar or boathook or something. The right tool for the job more than makes up for any difficulties posed by gender or size. Perhaps Sarah is from a more refined background. Anyway, something seemed to work as he had fewer relapses after she spoke.

Sarah Beck is a remarkable person and delightful to have aboard. It turned out that she has extensive experience sailing big schooners and square riggers. She sails for months each year and teaches celestial navigation while at sea. She's only had two real jobs. The first was training astronauts in Houston. Now she works at some astrophysical place in Cambridge. She holds a 500-ton Ocean Mates' license with sail endorsement, which is a substantial license. Although she's well-qualified for a master's license she has no interest in it. The fact is that she knows exactly what to do with any vessel at any time under any conditions.

I know what she means about the captain stuff. I was recently offered a job captaining a passenger-carrying schooner and sailed a few trips. I was rotten at it and the owners didn't want me. It felt terrible at first just as it did each time some woman would tell me that I was a no good bum and to get lost. They were right. Looking back I wondered what I was doing with them. Then I remembered what I was doing with them. Then I remembered the rest of the story and realized that it wasn't so much fun. It's the same thing with the captain business.

Thursday morning we left New Bedford and sailed into Newport by 5:30. We were the last ones to dock at the WoodenBoat show. They were glad to have us there and the *Story* generates a great deal of interest.

Harold Burnham drove down to the show that night and gave us his car to get home.

Matt volunteered to drive. Along the way he started whistling. Sarah said nothing, perhaps because we were no longer on the boat. So, if Sarah wasn't going to say anything it was up to me. It required more than usual tact. I said, "Listen, Matt, just because you've been good enough to drive and we're not in the boat doesn't mean you can torture us with whistling. Don't forget that you and I work together and I have an adze." The whistling ceased and we had a delightful ride home.

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Things had been little too cozy around the shop to suit me, I mean it was January and that's when we usually get the little bit of "winter" we get down here. I like it. I would think it is my old Yankee blood but Jane likes it, too, and she ain't got no Yankee blood. Anyway, we have been staying at the shop where it is cozy because of the little square wood burning heater in the apartment side and a great big experimental Rumford fireplace in the attached shop itself.

I also have a great big cast iron cylindrical style vertical wood heater in there for epoxifying purposes but usually the fireplace is good enough for the little piddling work we have been doing lately. We are finishing the "furniture" in another little sport boat is what. Anyway, that big fireplace has the sill better than 4' off the hearth and ain't but 18" deep. It'll make a hell of a fire if you can feed the wood to it and we sure can do that.

We had to clean up our scrap storage place which used to be a porch but is now enclosed and is about 30' long and maybe 10' wide. That's where we used to do our ripping and shaping and stored the table saw, shaper, and power feed. We also had a 10" jointer with a 6' bed out there that I traded something at least twice as useful, but we used the giant jointer every now and then.

So what happened was that I built some rickety racks along one wall to store short scraps on. Long scraps were leaned up against the other wall. You guessed it. After 25 years the damned place just got fuller and fuller until it was solid packed with scraps from wall to wall, sort of like a 30' beaver dam 8' high. We had only a little tunnel in one end to get in the back door of the shop and that began to pack up with old outboard motors which just needed some foot seals and maybe a new condenser and a water pump impeller to be ready to go again in case I needed an old outboard motor for something.

What caused the clean-up project was that when deer season came we couldn't get to the freezer anymore so we had to do something. Jane and I worked steady for three days carrying scraps out in the yard. We felt like ants tunneling through all that crap. It was interesting... sort of like unloading a time capsule. I had completely forgotten I even had that big jointer. When we discovered and uncovered it, I pushed the button and those 220 volts were still hooked up and it went to yowling its old useless yowl just like it was still the olden days.

It should have been very nostalgic as we uncovered the scraps from 25 years of projects, but I couldn't remember what the hell most of them were. I mean, we hauled off little short pieces of handmade molding from some forgotten remodeling job on some woman's notion of what to do to an old drafty house to make it yuppie comfortable. We found boogered up door panels, mis-mortised chair legs... oddball flooring scraps with handmade tongues and grooves from repair jobs on these asinine Victorian edifices that Thomasville is so full of.

We stacked all that crap out in the yard on a long run of sawhorses with boards on them. We sort of segregated the scraps into categories and both sons came and marveled at all that history and they were able to remember some of the projects that I had forgotten. For one thing, Wes found four short pieces of heart pine half round with a 3" radius... I thought it was kind of impressive as half-round molding goes but I couldn't

Time Capsule, Rumford Fireplaces, Ten/Ten and Drizzling in January

By Robb White

remember to save my life what the hell it was left over from. He said they were leftovers from the trophy case for the Grady County High School that we built about 1986.

The reason I couldn't remember was that we had to plane antebellum flutes in the part that went on the case and didn't want to flute the foot or so of scrap that we cut off. You ever fluted much half round? It's an aggravating job.

Me, I don't believe in decorations of any kind. I do not have any cosmetic piercing or tattoos upon my person and I don't understand all this. I mean why the hell does some old gal want to get fixed up so she looks like she stepped out of a nursing home for dolls, and why would young people in the perfect bloom of youth want to mutilate themselves permanently with the trends of the moment? You ought to see what happens to a stern-mount Harley Davidson tattoo when it widens out as the substrate expands.

We figured to build some more better racks and put that crap back in there so well-organized that we could find something to flute any time we wanted to, but after the initial thrill of discovery the adventure aspects of it sort of dwindled and those priceless scraps just stayed out there covered in FEMA blue in the winter drizzle while we worked in the shop on Christmas presents and the boat and various oddball projects peculiar to people like us.

For one thing, I made a most marvelous horse puppet. Although I have seen a lot of puppets and most of them were more artistic than this horse, I have never seen such a good working puppet in my life. I mean, Charlie McCarthy was sort of cute but he couldn't do anything except move his mouth in a vertical manner and roll his eyes. This horse has all five gaits and every one is perfectly accurate. You ought to see him kick up his heels... marvelous, y'all.

So we cozied it up in the shop by burning those scraps in the tall Rumford fireplace. You ought to have seen the flames leap up from those chunks of heart half round. I mean, we had to back up clear to the band-saw to keep from scorching our clothes. The radiant heat from the 5' of flames was so hot that it made the table saw belt stink like cooking rubber. Of course, burning dry architectural wood and boogered-up chair legs makes a short lasting fire so we had to work like ants to keep it fed, but fortunately we needed the exercise and there were plenty more scraps so we kept it cozy in there.

It was too damned cozy to suit me. I went hunting enough to fill the now accessible freezer and we went fishing a time or two with various grandchildren and caught some good fish and got a little bit cold but not enough to amount to much... certainly not enough to thicken my old northern blood, so Jane and I decided to go the coast right after deer season closed in January.

One of the piddling projects I engaged in when things were cozy was to doll up the

old original Rescue Minor propeller. You know, William Atkin specified a 10" diameter, 10" pitch propeller for the boat and said exactly how fast it needed to turn to make the boat run its designed speed of 17.5 mph (statute). I can't remember any of the statistics but I set up the belt drive to turn the shaft at Atkin's rpm and had the right prop. The little Kubota (actually only 18hp cut back to suit the notions of California... all it would take would be a tweak of a metric Allen screw to turn it up to 20hp but I haven't done that... yet... ain't got no damned metric Allen wrenches) would turn the 10/10 but it was brand new so I put a little 9/8 weedless wheel on there to break the engine in.

The boat would do what I wanted it to do and was absolutely weedless, which is a thing in itself, so I just ran the undersized and underpitched wheel for four years... some 2,200 hours. During the cozy times of the deep dark Georgia winter (say, low 40s at night... low 60s day) I used what I had discovered to modify the old 10/10. For one thing, the wheel was built for an old WWII Storm Boat Motor which (in case you haven't read my book about it) was built to haul troops to storm the beach at planing speed. It was a big durn outboard motor and though I don't think it was ever used in wartime, they made a lot of them and a lot of propellers.

I know the whereabouts of about 200lbs of those old wheels. That's where I got the one I put on the Rescue Minor. It is a good looking three blade prop but it isn't weedless worth a flip. What I did during cozy times was to cut the leading edge back into a little more weed shedding slope and sharpen it and tap a very abrupt little cup into the trailing edge and balance it and polish it and... get this... spray it with this stuff that claims to completely protect anything from anything. From their website (www.nyalic.com) one would think that you could spray a single coat on a new penny and throw it in the salt water and, when you pulled it up after a hundred years, it would shine like a new penny. It costs \$30 for a 12oz aerosol can but, hell man, I have 30 dadblamed bucks so I sprayed one coat on that shiny propeller. We'll see.

It was interesting. As soon as we had put in and cranked up (in fog so thick I couldn't even see the handheld GPS), I noticed the difference. The boat was much faster at dead idle. It was still wakeless but moseyed down the river a good bit faster. When we got to where I thought the "Resume" sign was, it didn't take near the rpms to get us planing (which we had a screen door, a cast off chest-of-drawers, and a load of replenishment junk and drinking water... say 800lbs total load including us). I stayed over in the shallow water and as soon as the GPS got combobulated I was able to make an eyeball observation.

I had to eyeball it because I don't have a dedicated tachometer on the boat. I have an old mechanical handheld (Stewart Warner... USA... never fail) tach with which I had long ago ascertained that the engine would turn up to its governed 3,600rpm turning that same wheel. What I observed was that at the sound of the rpms that used to push the boat at 10.5 knots (my preferred revolutions only because of how I like the way the engine sounds) with the weedless prop I was getting 12.5kts on the GPS. The fog finally lifted and we ran all around like that and both we and the engine and the boat liked it fine.

We ran it wide open for a little while and the GPS read 15.5kts which I bet, if I did the math, would translate pretty close to Atkin's 17.5 statute mph. I know the engine was turning up and I know it wasn't smoking and believe maybe it could stand a little more pitch to the wheel and go some faster particularly if I tweaked the Allen screw and un-Californified it.

As a matter of fact, I have a 10/12 storm boat motor propeller that I tried out a long time ago and which I thought pushed the boat over 20kts for a little while, but you know, I don't actually give a darn how fast I can make it go. We cut back to 12.5 as soon as I was certain the GPS had stabilized enough to give us a fairly valid top speed. What I wonder was what kind of arithmetic Atkin used to figure the speed of the boat at those rpms with that wheel? You don't reckon he eyeballed it, do you? Like I said before, I believe he knew what he was doing.

So Jane and I got our blood thickened up pretty good. We had to run the boat enough to see what was what with the wheel, but there was a slight January drizzle combined with

spotty fog and a pretty good chop to boot. Jane has a way of sort of rearranging herself into an aerodynamic shape against the elements when riding in a boat in those conditions. She arranges her boat towel to keep the water running down the longitudinal seat from wetting the place where she sits and rides it out. You know, if you wear your britches legs outside your rubber boots the water won't run down in there with your feet quite so bad and wet clothes actually insulate pretty good.

We ran all over the place trying to find some grass to run through to see how weedless my jacklegger was but couldn't find any. We were also trying to run up some hours to find out what the gas mileage was under the new conditions. We might have burned a gallon of fuel but I don't know yet... too damned cold and miserable to wade out there to look in the darn tank... Sure is cozy up here in the unheated coast house in our snowmobile suits, though. We'll go back to the shop and burn some more of those scraps tomorrow but we'll have to come back to the coast to find out some more data. I'll let you know.



Rumford Fireplaces

Rumford was a British Loyalist who lived in America until the Revolution. Then he ran off to England and, to reward him for his loyalty (I guess) they made him a count. I would rather have done like Franklin and run to France and become an international heroic commoner recognized for great wit and a good iron stove instead of the "noble" inventor of a successful fireplace.

Anyway, the principle Count Rumford figured out was that a fireplace draws, not because of how close the chimney is to the fire but how the air in the chimney acts. In a Rumford fireplace there is a "smoke shelf" on top of the sill in the front. As the hot air rises in the back of the chimney, cold air comes down the front, hits the smoke shelf, and entrains the smoke from the fire as it passes from front to rear and, as it is heated, rises with the smoke up the back. The way to tell a Rumford fireplace without getting in there and making like Santa Claus is that the fireplace itself looks very high and shallow... looks like it was made to smoke up the room but it actually works very well. The fact that most of the fire is not hidden inside the chimney makes it throw more heat.

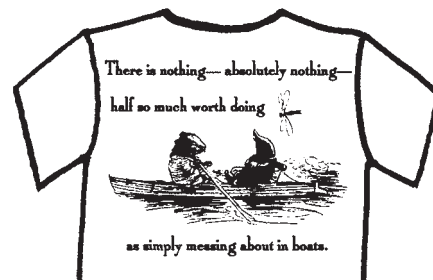
The only trouble with it is that the high fire, while it is ascending all that way to the chimney, must not be interfered with by stray currents of air like, as the Count said, "Women with voluminous gowns passing quickly by." That's why you can see a few smoke stains on the sill of ours. We, as an experiment, exaggerated the proportions just to see and my experiment was a success for the most part. The only time it smokes is when one of these damned women passes quickly by in her voluminous gown.

If you want to see another Rumford fireplace without having to run me to ground here at the shop in winter is to go to the Thomas County Historical Society Museum on Hansell Street in Thomasville, Georgia. In back of the museum is a bonafide old log house like common people around here lived in. My son and I did a lot of work setting the old thing up in its new, urban situation and one of the things we did was to build a Rumford fireplace. It is not exaggerated like the one at the shop but, if it is burning and you have on voluminous gowns, don't strut your stuff past it too quickly.

How to Balance a Propeller To a Fare Thee Well

First thing is to turn a shaft that exactly fits the hole. It doesn't have to be metal and you can do it with jacklegger if you don't have a lathe. The trick is to make it perfectly concentric with the hole with the ends sticking out the on both sides of the hub. If there is a taper to the hole like on an inboard prop, it is a little more difficult but it is still just a thing. You balance the prop on two parallel, level, sharp straight edges. The reason you want a sharp edge is so there will be as little friction as possible as the prop rolls on its shaft so that the heavy side is down. Sand off a little on the front (convex) side of the heavy blade until the propeller will sit on its shaft on the straight edge without rolling so the same blade is down over and over again.

I know this sounds non-precise but, before you pass judgement, get a brand new "machined pitch" wheel out of the box and try this same stunt on it. If you really want to test the accuracy, figure out a way to see if the center of the blades run in a perfect orbit in a plane perpendicular to the shaft hole. Perfection is a long way from the tolerance of propeller manufacturers.



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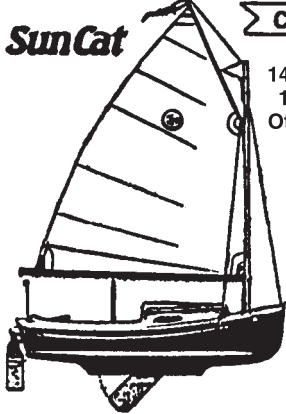
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For a long time I have wanted to sneak away all by myself where no one could inquire or laugh at what I was doing and come forth with something a little radical to play with. Say a boat costing 15 bucks and a hydroplane that could use a kicker on her stern and which would skedaddle under that urge. So *Larklet*, named in deference and reference after a boat of another type of 30 years ago, Capt. Tom Day's famous sailing innovation designed by Chas. G. Davis and of which there were about 3,000 built in all parts of the world, so, *Larklet* was conceived and is now building on Lake Minnetonka, and such radicalness you never saw!

By Weston Farmer (ca 1925)

Like the old *Lark*, she is very extreme in simplicity. I don't expect you to like her until you get acquainted with her, for the drawings are made with a view to the looks of the boat in three dimensions and she is drawn as is, with no attempt to make the paper side of her personality other than true. For simplicity's sake she is built strip construction. I have a hunch that 3/8" thick strip construction will prove lighter, much tighter, and hence more portable, faster, and more useful and long lived than a seam and batten boat. Seam and batten is great

The seam batten type of boat, unless exceptionally well built or covered with canvas, will pound to pieces in one season. I have no respect for a boat like that. I think it best to put the weight where it will make for long life and stiffness and freedom from the call of the bilgewater sponge. This all is assuming an outboard in the higher classes is used. Honest, now, isn't notching frames for battens just a lot tougher than merely driving nails? That's about all you have to do in the way of fitting on a strip boat.

So *Larklet* is a strip boat and here is the simple chine construction illustrated in the sketches. Really too simple to need explanation so I'll let the drawings tell their own story. They can be so much plainer.

As a symphony in naval architecture, she just ain't. For classic beauty she's a bit spare of cheek and square in the buttocks. *Larklet* has no pretense. If she cannot be graceful, she can have a personality all her own and she obtains it by great frankness, by simplicity, and her adequate fulfillment of purpose with great economy. The profile lines are straight with angles at the step indicating and implying by their set, stiffness fore and aft, the bow, straight as if stretched between sheer and bottom implying extreme tension, and raked as it might be with strain. Not too much, just temperately, for determined ladies must have some suggestion of jaw and chin, even if of simple breeding.

In plain, she is irreducibly simple. What we might call her deck line, or plank sheer line, or whatever it is called in a boat so small that it has neither, is a line that stereoscopically lends a great deal of character to this little hull. It is the natural sweep of the cedar strips as of section shown in Fig. 5 which determines this line, if it is to be had without suggestion of strain, and so it is drawn this way. The whole combination as is furnishes one with a boat of strength, cheapness, dead easy building, and a boat that is plain without pretense.

So much for architecture. Structurally there are a couple of things to touch on before an outline of how to set her up and build her is given. There is 1" in 4" deadrise given the bottom. No more, no less. This has been found right in this kind of strip boat for the purpose of compressing the seam under pressure so the bottom strips will have no tendency to open up when planing from crest to crest, or should I say bump to bump? If any less is used there will be this tendency. If any more is used, there will result a hogging out action. Deadrise in the form of V, either straight or concave, is about as useless to an outboard propelled hydro as silk underwear on a razorback hawg.

These little motors have enough work to do to keep the hull on the surface, let alone waste any power. They can barely get 100% planing action on any but the very lightest boats, barely passing the "burble point" where water ceases to act like nice water and takes on the characteristics of hard pig iron. The whole problem of success with small powered hydros is to keep the weight per square foot of plane beam low and to still get a boat stiff enough to hold her designed shape, as much with an eye, this latter, on durability as on adherence to line.

Well, what about *Margaret*, the 151 classic, and *Spitfire*, you will ask? On these



Larklet profile and plan.



Lines and Offsets.

Construction plan.



boats there is much lighter scale of scantling per pound displacement than possible in an outboard hydro. The weight per horsepower, instead of being around 70lbs as in an outboard, is more nearly 10lbs in *Spitfire*'s case. There is need with this comparative reserve for something to relieve the bottom of sudden strain, and even the amount of deadrise then, while often wasting power, gives them plenty of bumping. They must have it to keep the bottom from pounding in and they have power enough to afford it. The outboard is heavily enough built, therefore it doesn't need deadrise to ease the bottom, and it couldn't efficiently afford it anyway.

And while talking about this shape of bottoms, let me say I know perfectly well there may be ways of "going" that will give *Larklet* a good chase, but *Larklet* will give you a wholesome taste of travel with fewest regrets for the expenditure when another season rolls around. A mortar trough, if light enough, would be plenty fast, but just keep in mind the rub-a-dub-dub story about the butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker, and what they all went to sea in. No sour grapes here, just sense, common and lots of it.

So, now with the wherefores sponsoring the design we can sketch a bit of what to do to get her built. My good friend over in Larchmont, Mr. Cornelius Van Ness, kids me about all how-to-builds being the same at the same places, every time. "Lay the lines down. Take a piece of good, clear oak for the keel, mark... , etc." In a way he is right, but it is impossible to foresee every contingency in the building of a boat. What is duck soup to one man may be a real problem to another, and the best advice is this, a man shouldn't start to build a boat until he is sure he has some idea of how to go about it, and then he ought to build it to find out if he's right. *Larklet* ought to be an answer to Van's prayer. Go ahead and build her, the directions will furnish themselves.

I'd most certainly get some building paper, lay it on a floor, and redraw the lines full size. Then, whether you know it or not, you will have the boat "laid out." Build the molds from the full size sections, paring off enough to allow for the planking. If you get this far the drawings will show you what to do from this point on.

Paint her any way you wish. White or green hull, gray or buff interior should be okay and if you can pot lead the bottom you will be surprised how much faster and how much less water the hull will throw.

Larklet should show 20 miles with a Lockwood Ash and about the same with a Caille. The big Johnson should give 23-25 miles. The 2hp sizes will not work out on a step hydro like *Larklet*. It should only take a day or two to build her, she is so simple.

With all the present interest in hydroplanes that exists now and because of the 151 class, the new and comparatively inexpensive outboards will be the cause of a new, and I hope permanent, class in the MVP BA sooner or later. Then for a few dollars, instead of a few hundreds, new ideas, types, tubs, and freaks can be built. The faster of these will be reflected in the design of the 151 boats and higher and these small "dime laboratory" designs will no doubt be responsible for improved large hulls.

And now, as long as we have the floor on this topic, it might be well to outline the salient factors upon which a hydroplane success is based and show the things which expe-

rience has shown to produce lasting satisfaction. Along with such a discussion, I have selected from the 151 class the boat used for practically every small hydro design as a point of departure, *Margaret III*, and have approximately redrawn her lines only for purposes of illustration. This famous boat was whittled out by Chris Smith, taken off by Elliot Gardner, built for Lou Selby, and changed the trend of design in inexpensive fast boats, setting the example for a long time.

At present there is a boat called *Spitfire*, built from plans appearing in a contemporary by John L. Hacker, which has officially bettered the old and once phenomenal *Margaret* 39 miles by 5 to 7, raising the mark well into the 40s. It is written me that Harry Miller with *Angeles*, a modified Pelican model, a subsequent improvement on the Pelican which produced *Spitfire IV*, has made 61.23 miles using one of his special engines. This

special stuff, however, is treading on the heels of special privilege and the dollar sign, so it's time to check that.

I have redrawn also the lines of the first and second *Pelican* models approximately, for reference. Also, I have drawn some diagrams showing the forces acting on a hydroplane and points which should be looked to in the run of lines. In the small outboard boats for reference I have approximately drawn the Baby Buzz types of last year which were propagated by the Johnson Co. for use with the Johnson Big Twin, many of which were built. The Eckfield Boat Co. also got out last season a one-step hydro for use with the Lockwood Ash, and for reference also this is given here.

Then I have drawn the abbreviated mortar trough minus any step which, while it goes and goes, has a sure 'nuff one man crew, no more could ride in her, and the crew uni-

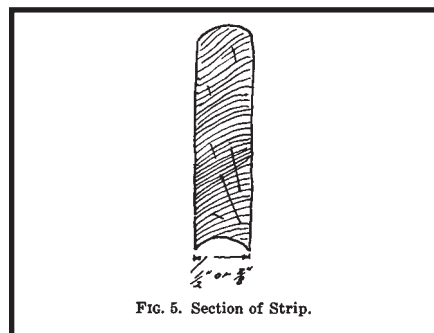


Fig. 5. Section of Strip.

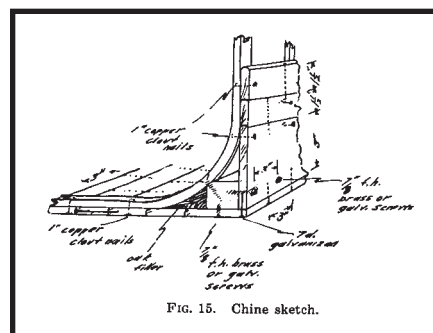


Fig. 15. Chine sketch.

Fig. 5.

Chine sketch.

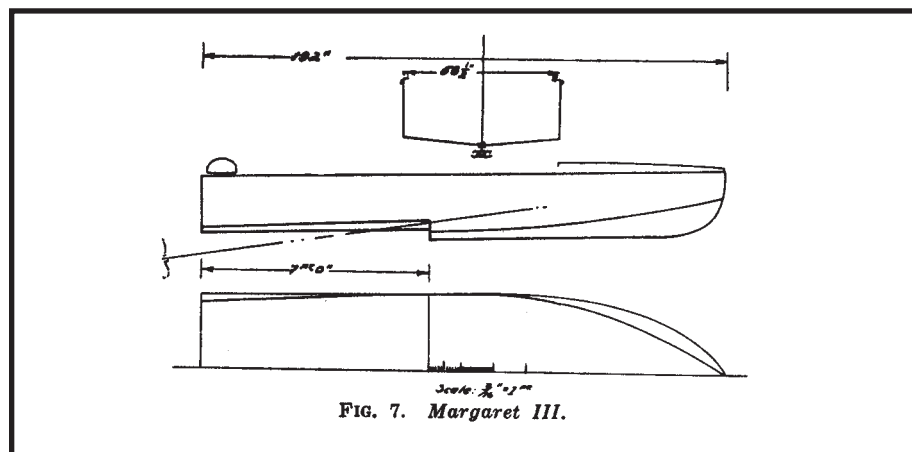


Fig. 7. *Margaret III*.

Margaret III.

Spitfire.

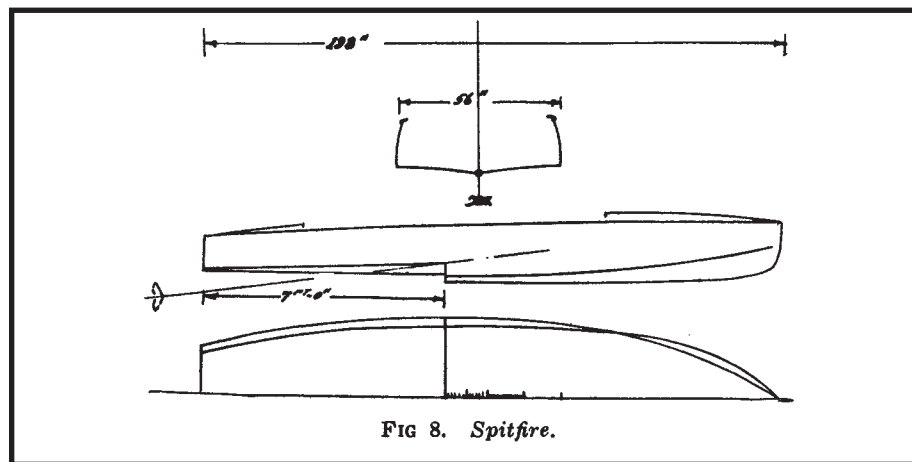


Fig. 8. *Spitfire*.

form is a bathing suit. Bruno Beckhard seems to have solved the wee plane idea by an inverted bottom, as in Fig. 12.

A plane surface will have a reaction to the water as in the diagram of forces as at Fig. 9. If any deadrise is included the amount of power wasted is graphically illustrated in Fig. 10. If you have enough power to spare and think the advantages of easiness outweigh pep, you will have a longer lived boat, for reasons noted.

The primary purpose of the step is to reduce wetted surface and it is a device which is automatically compensating. When the speed is increased to the point where the lift sets the hull out on top, the water flows past the break in the hull, cutting out a portion of the bottom from contact with the water, thus reducing the friction and allowing the available power to be absorbed in producing more speed. A state of equilibrium is maintained between the hull, the water, and the power of the engine. The point requiring the most power for a given speed will be the point where the hull just is climbing out. From that point, known as the "hump" or "burble point," to the ultimate speed, the power required falls off, resulting in an increase in speed until the resistance from the added speed again equals

the power available.

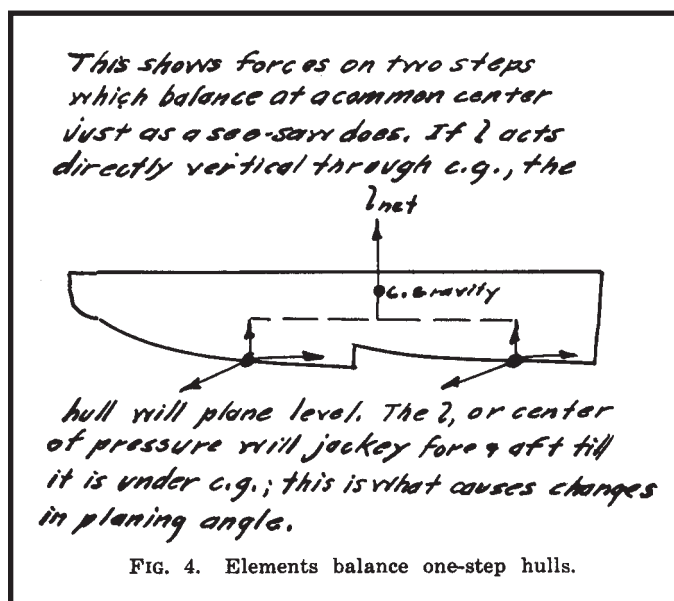
Therefore, the thing to keep paramount in the design of a hydroplane, according to graph in Fig. 13, is to keep the power and speed at the hump low. Power is fixed at a definite maximum with any given engine so the weight must be low consistent with safety and longevity, the beam must be generous consistent with transverse rigidity, in order to produce and lower the hump point. And the lower the burble speed the greater the ultimate speed because the margin of surplus power is greater, to put it simply.

With the two points of deadrise and burble point importance pointed out, balance, importance of step ventilation and placement, and a word about beam and propeller wheels is all you need to know to design a creditable hydro. Hydroplanes are like patients. A doctor will tell you his reputation is based more on the powerful inclination of the patient's body to heal itself than on anything he does toward curing. He will say his knowledge enables him to remove the source, the forces of nature do the rest. So with this hydro business. The man who can remove the causes of retardation will have a good hydro and can pose as a peach of a naval architect. The forces of nature will

powerfully aid him if he will hunt out and provide the breaks for the hull to act with. The boat will exhibit a powerful tendency to go in spite of any "designing" he may do.

Balance with any given boat implies a setting of the weights so that the center of gravity is placed where the hull runs smoothest and fastest. In an outboard hull the live weight of the crew can be so easily shifted that no attention needs to be placed on balance, for it can be found by trial.

Step boats, as I have said, depend on the step to reduce the wetted surface. Of what use then is a step which drags water? The boat illustrated in Fig. 11 would be much faster if the step were deeper. Not because the angle of the step would make any difference, because it wouldn't unless it was increased excessively, but because the air will flow in and allow normal atmospheric pressure to clear away the eddies and tail water dragged along with the boat, making it even less efficient than a single surface hull would be. Don't be afraid to ventilate the step. As far as step placement is concerned, the more weight that can be thrown on the fore step, the better. The stern should touch with enough force to support the motor and little else. In this position, though, the hull



Elements of balance in one-step hulls.

Plane reaction in the sawed off mortar tub buggy.

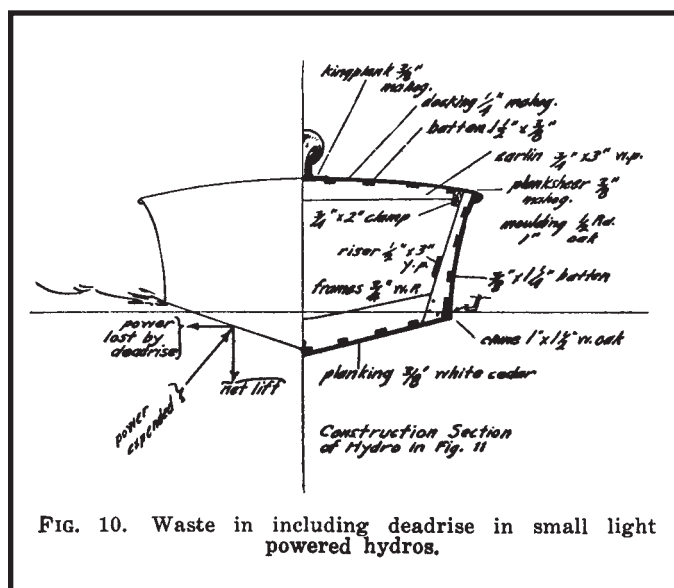
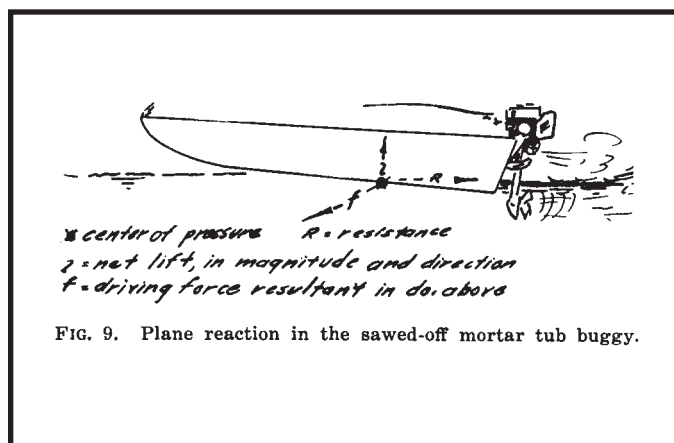
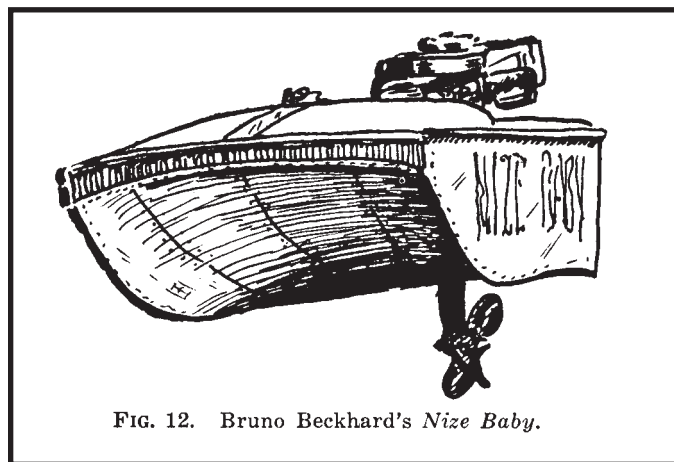


Fig. 10.

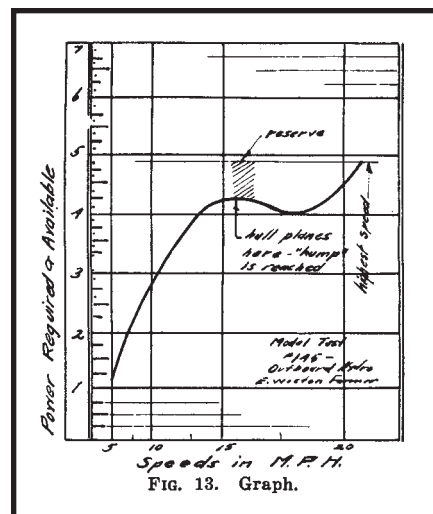
Bruno Beckhard's Nize Baby.



may be too sensitive to changes in trim from surface conditions, and about a 60-40 ratio between bow step loads and stern step loads will be a bit more stable. The break in the hull should be from 32-40% of the hull length from the transom.

There has been a theory of induced drag propounded by Doc Prandtl of Germany, which has sent many of the notions we have about "aspect ratio" in aeronautical engineering to the junk heap. However, aspect ratio apparent was useful enough under the old conceptions of aero and hydrodynamic theory and I'll still maintain is useful for it is compensating and simple to state. Briefly, the thinner and narrower a wing was in plane, the more lift for a given power could be obtained assuming the area to be the same. This comparison works well enough in a hydro.

Take Atkin's *Moonshine*, for example. Bill is a sea goin' designer, rich in tradition, and he apparently hated to cram enough beam on *Moonshine* to make her other than very pleasing and boaty in plan. Sad, though, she would be a better hydro if the aspect ratio, the chord, and the immersed fore and aft surfaces were spread approximate Fig. 14, to illustrate the idea. There is a point, of course, where excessive beam weakens the boat and makes it weavy. Other things considered, beam is very important, just enough, not too much. I should say a beam to length ratio, aspect ratio if you want to be aeronautical, of 1% is good for high powered 151 boats and that up to 33-43% is better for the lower powers and smaller sizes of "baby hydro." Yes, even 50%.



°Graph.

Moonshine.

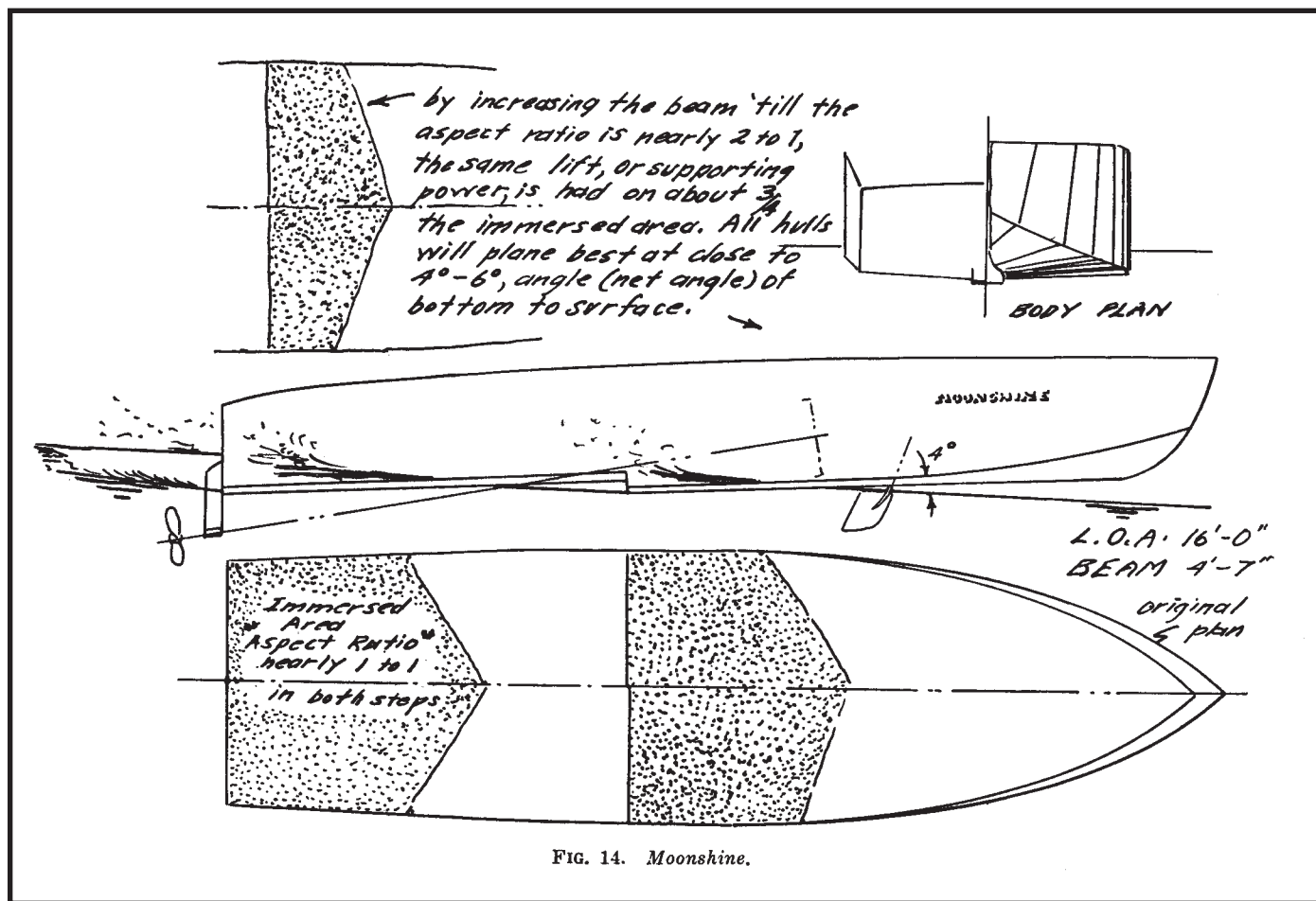


FIG. 14. *Moonshine.*

Baby Buzz.

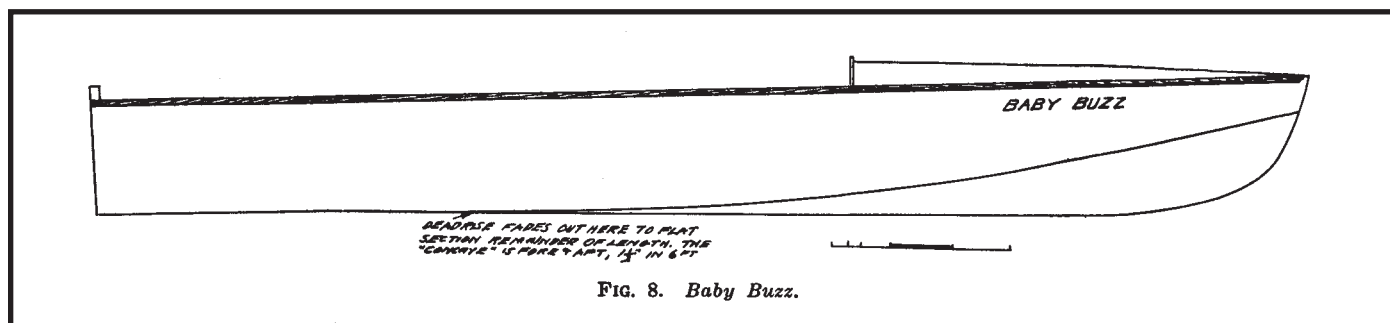


FIG. 8. *Baby Buzz.*

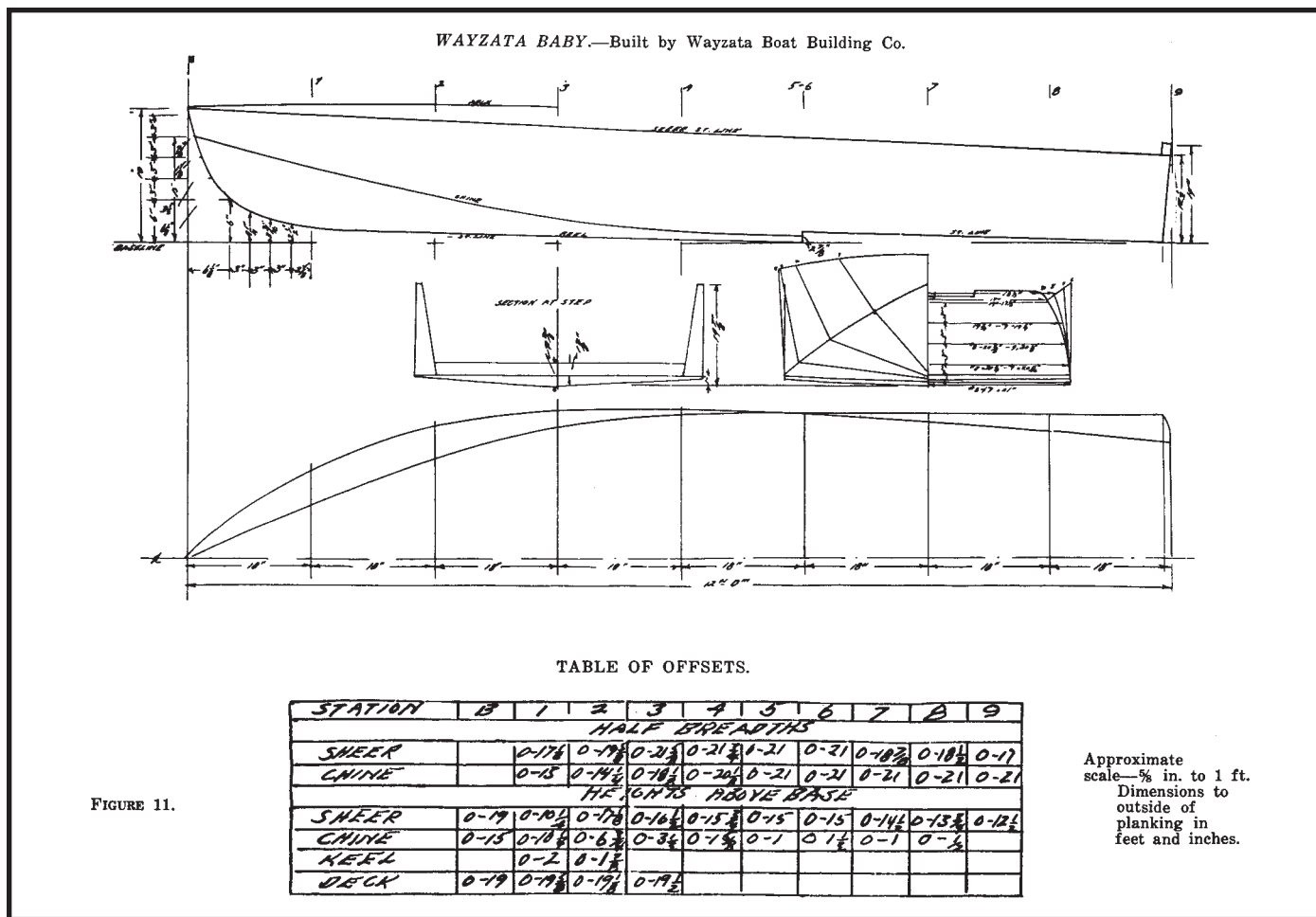


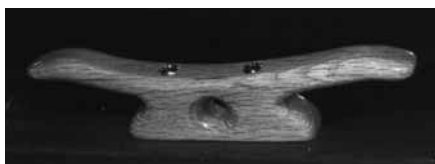
FIGURE 11.

Winters Brothers Give Berth to a Pygmy!

By Fred Winters

In this age of ever-increasing production efficiency, the Winters Brothers have brought another wherry into the world thanks to Pygmy Boats. The kit is first rate and adding custom details seem to enhance the process. Our specialty is wood hardware and I am joking about production efficiency since it takes about a year for each new boat. As the little brother I am responsible for practical application while my older brother provides long distance motivation and consultation based on his naval architecture experience at University of Michigan.

We have scheduled a spring launch on Big Bay de Noc near the Historic Townsite of Fayette, Michigan. We look forward to rowing into the harbor at Fayette, an event that would have been commonplace for a boat of this design in the late 19th century. If you are interested in learning more about the wherry or our wood hardware, we can be reached by snail mail at Winters Brothers, 4555 II Rd., Garden, MI 49835.



Load it up with as much gear as you can cram into it, just be sure to leave a little room for the paddlers, and head for open water. Add some winds up to gale force and waves with foam blowing off the whitecaps and then enjoy the safe and stable ride across the lake. Imagine Moosehead Lake or Hudson's Bay. This is home to the Prospector. Just the name is inspiring and brings to one's mind visions of extended journeys into the wilderness in search of the next big mineral discovery, carrying supplies and equipment for weeks at a time.

The big surprise comes when you unload the Prospector and paddle solo. Kneel ahead of the quarter thwart, lean the boat over about as far as you dare, and see how it dances across the water. She goes exactly where you point her but she is ready to spin around in her own length when you want her to. The 2" of rocker, the rounded bilges, and the tumblehome must have something to do with this. This solo performance is probably an unintended consequence. I'm sure that the designers were not overly concerned with this feature, they were thinking more about heavy load carrying capabilities when they came up with this design.

Roger MacGregor, in his book, *When the Chestnut Was in Flower*, reports that Henry Wicksteed was presumed to be the designer of the Prospector. Wicksteed was an engineer and marine architect who had been using Chestnut Cruisers and Freighters in his work routing the Canadian Northern Railway. The men using the canoes needed something in between the Cruisers and the Freighters. Chestnut initially offered the Cruisers with an additional 2" of depth but they found that they still didn't have the load capacity that they wanted and needed. The first new models were called the James Bay Railway Canoes. Starting in 1913 14', 16-1/2', and 19' sizes were made for a year or two but they were not quite what Wicksteed's men needed so he went back to Chestnut with further design modifications.

The first Prospectors appeared in the Chestnut catalog in 1922 and by 1934 they were making them in 12', 14', 15', 16', 17', and 18' sizes. All Prospectors were made in the second grade only with a few small knots and other flaws allowed in the northern white cedar that was used for ribs and planking. The factory's thinking was that their Prospector customers were more interested in capability and dependability than good looks. Not too many of these big boats were sent down to Boston for livery duty on the Charles River to be used for paddling the ladies around on a Sunday afternoon. More than likely they found their way to the northern woods for the tough work they were intended for.

Chestnut always had interesting telegraph code names for their various canoes, and, for the Prospectors they went like this:

As you can see, the 16', 17', and 18' are sizable canoes with payloads up to 1,000lbs, yet even the Voyageur at 85lbs is somewhat

Chestnut Prospector Canoes Everyone Loves Them!

By Steve Lapey

Reprinted from the Norumbega Chapter
WCHA Newsletter

manageable for those pesky portages that appear on every expedition.

The smallest one, the 12' Forest, was designed for the smaller solo paddler or for children. The Forest was discontinued in the late 1950s and the form for it was later modified to produce the Mermaid, 12' long by 40" wide for the single fisherman and to compete with the popular Sportspal which was flooding the market. The 14' Fire was popular with trappers and fishermen carrying into those remote lakes and trapping areas. The 15' Ranger was perfect for the solo timber cruiser and was used by many forest rangers for their patrol work. The 16' Fort was often used as a tandem canoe for moderate expeditions and was used by many camps for wilderness tripping. The 17' Garry and the 18' Voyageur were intended for the most extreme expeditions requiring heavy duty hulls with tremendous load capacities,

Bill Mason swore by the 16' Prospector. In his book, *Song of the Paddle*, he says, "If I could have only one canoe, it would be the original Chestnut, wood canvas, 16' Prospector. There are faster, slower, tougher, less stable, more stable, more beautiful, and less beautiful canoes than the Prospector, but none that do everything as well."

In his famous book, *Dangerous River*, adventure writer R.M. Patterson tells of his trips to the Nahanni River in the Northwest Territories in 1927 and 1928 using the Chestnut Prospector canoes. Of the Prospector, Patterson wrote, "Well, for one thing you're not using a round bottomed, tipple pleasure canoe, you're using a work canoe. I had a 16' Chestnut, Prospector Model, 36" wide and 14" inches deep, a canoe with beautiful lines but fairly flat-bottomed. Load three or four hundred pounds of outfit into that and you've got a pretty stable canoe, something that you won't upset at all easily. You can stand up and pole it, you can crawl about over the load in it and pull yourself upstream by hand holes in the canyon wall, and you can put all your weight onto the gunwale on one side of it and still it won't upset from that cause alone."

Patterson also had two freighters along on his 1928 expedition, a 19' and an 18' that he described as, "a shockingly battered antique with its canvas hide flapping loosely over its cedar frame, the sort of thing a sane man would hesitate to use on a quiet lake, let alone on the Nahanni."

In our Norumbega Chapter of the Wooden Canoe Heritage Association, John Fitzgerald has a red 17' Garry and Larry Meyer also has a Garry, painted green with the shellacked bottom. Visitors to the Warehouse Store in Maynard, Massachusetts, may have seen a Prospector on display there. The former owner of the store, the late Ed Haynes, was the sales representative for Chestnut in the 1960s and '70s. Steve Comeau has a 15' Ranger stripper that he built. Recently I did a restoration on an 18' Voyageur belonging to one of my neighbors here in Groveland. That 18' filled up my workshop, it's really a big canoe.

Fitz and I were discussing the size of it one day and I offered that if one was going on a moose hunting trip and planning on bringing a large bull out of the wilderness, the Voyageur was the canoe for the job. Ever since then we have referred to this as the "Moose Hunter." All of these local Prospectors were made in the 1970s, toward the end of the line for Chestnut, and they all suffer somewhat from the quality control problems that Chestnut was reportedly having in those days. I noticed that on the Voyageur, for instance, each rib was attached to the inwale with only one steel nail placed in each end and that the selection of wood and the fit and finish were not up there with the better canoes. However, when I was through with it, the ribs were securely screwed to the inwales, the bad wood was all replaced, and the enamel finish had a sheen that was never seen in Fredericton, New Brunswick. With a little care this Prospector will give its owners another lifetime of service.

Any time you have an opportunity to paddle a Prospector, whatever you do, don't pass it up. Learn for yourself why everyone loves a Prospector!



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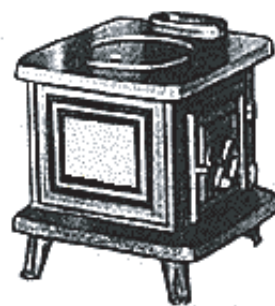
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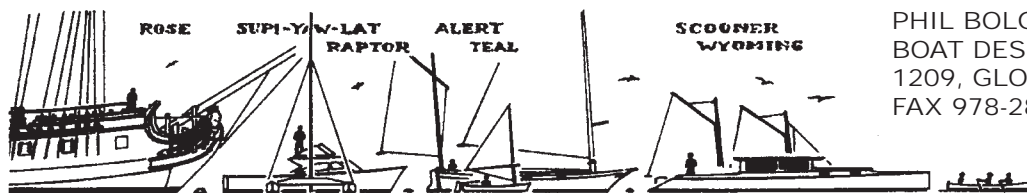


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Chicago Coble Low-Power Auxiliary Launch 25'1" x 6'0" Design #273

The second part of this article was a chapter in my 1976 book, *The Folding Schooner*. The book is long out of print, it was reprinted as half of the 1983 paperback *Bolger Boats*, but that's out of print also. It still reads pretty well except that the possible 16mph top speed mentioned now looks optimistic. But to this day I wouldn't change her shape for the displacement speeds she was primarily meant for.

I would now have a boom on the spritsail. Boomless spritsails can work very well close-hauled. I sailed one for years in my Thomaston Galley. But they're inefficient reaching and downright nasty before the wind, which are the only points of sailing of much interest in this design. What happens with a spritsail before the wind is that the sheet doesn't control the peak sprit, which sags forward and starts the boat rolling. Saving the added spar does not justify the nuisance or even hazard.

Some years after the design was made, Stanley Woodward took a fancy to its nice shape and commissioned a wooden version of the design, the inboard diesel version shown here. The change in construction from the shape meant for fiberglass to a light wood hull got quite complicated, with stringer cold-molded bottom and numerous sawn frames, to say nothing of the soft-nose stem. It would have been a nice boat but very expensive. Nowadays we'd suggest building her glued strip on the bottom and carving the nose out of a laminated block. Stanley, who at that time always had multiple boat projects

Bolger on Design

in mind, did not get around to this one. Too bad as she certainly would have been (still would be) a graceful craft with nice manners.

Plans of the Chicago Coble, our Design #273, are available for \$200 to build one boat, sent priority mail, rolled in a tube, from: Phil Bolger & Friends, Inc., P.O. Box 1209, Gloucester, MA 01930.

Chicago Coble

25'1" x 6'0"

(From *The Folding Schooner* - 1976)

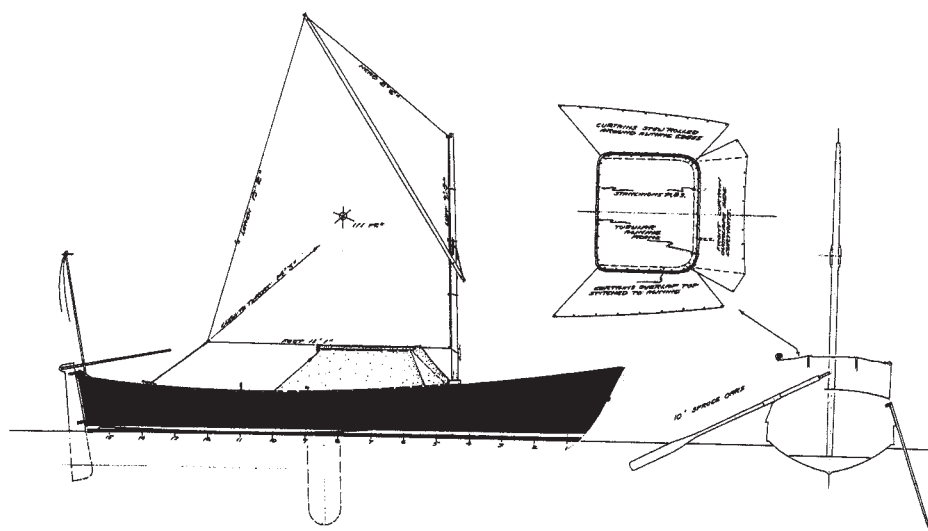
John Rowe is a Chicago boatbuilder who thought the squatty boats with huge engines he saw used as day-fishing boats there could be improved on. His idea was that a modified Yorkshire Coble, with its easy entrance and clean run, would go at good speed with a small engine, could be sailed after a fashion if the engine gave out, and might even be rowed a little way. The tumblehome upper sides of the Coble would serve the same function as a deck in providing reserve buoyancy and have the added advantage in a slim boat that nobody would be able to step far out from the centerline and claim the boat was tender because it heeled.

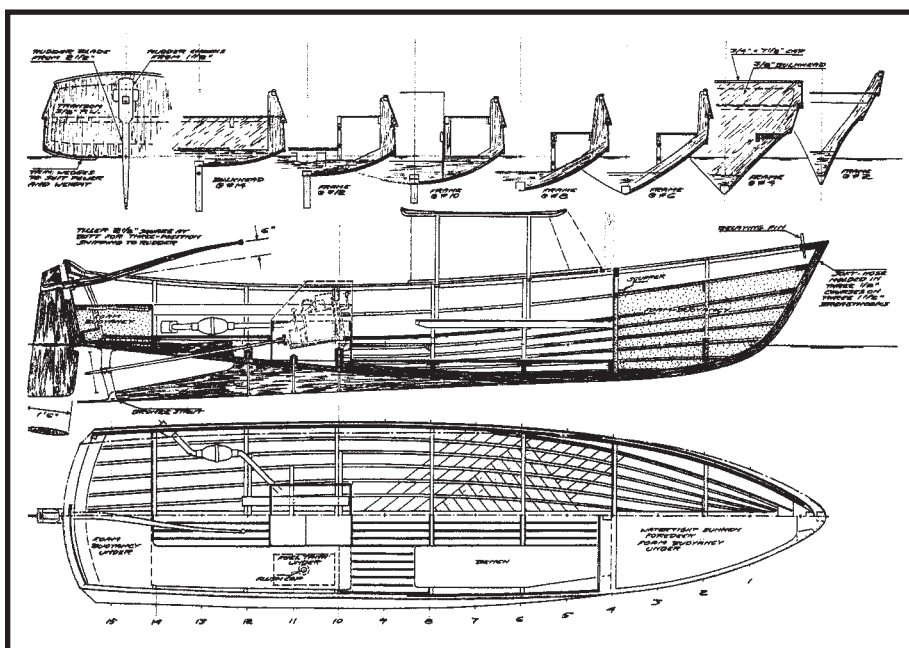
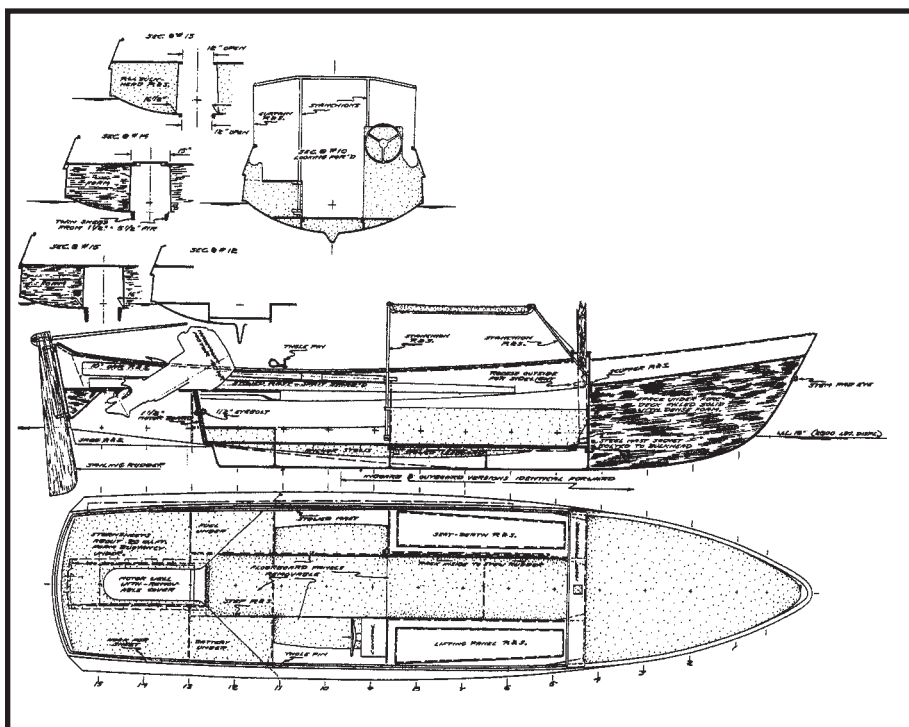
All this was much to my taste and I took a lot of trouble working it up with many versions so there'd be something for everybody, as they were to be built semi-custom, at least at first. Rowe built a rough full-size hull of expendable materials for a trial, which by all accounts ran very nicely as it could hardly help doing on these proportions.

It was interesting to hear about the reactions of potential customers. There were some sensible suggestions, the drawing showing her with movable seats to sit on facing outboard came from one. But the main theme seems to have been a demand for more power and speed, both inboard and outboard, disconcerting to a builder who'd hypothesized a demand for economy and simplicity. Granted that this was before the uproar about a fuel shortage, it was still remarkable.

There was a definite demand, which I'd suspected for a long time, for a light diesel boat. I specified that a 40hp diesel should be maximum power for around 16mph top speed. As it turned out this was about the minimum power that anybody Rowe approached seemed willing to even contemplate, most insisted on much more. His original and (I thought) sensible idea of standardizing on something like 10hp for 8mph drew no interest at all, though it's to be hoped that there was somebody skulking around unnoticed who would have liked it.

Oddly enough, there does seem to be some demand for really slow motorboats on scaled-down fisherman hulls (obsolete model fishermen at that), but next to none for a boat that can slide along much faster with very little more power, or even the same power. I've been out in a boat designed by the late William Atkin that looked and ran like a destroyer with a tiny, old-fashioned Couach two-cylinder and I've seen the late L. Francis Herreshoff sweep by in a boat at 15kts hardly leaving a wake on the water, but their demonstrations met with total indifference. This kind of performance calls for very long boats, and I can see why many people object to extra length on account of storage and docking expenses, but it seems to me there ought to be many others, somewhere, to whom storage and docking are no problem, yet they're not to be found.





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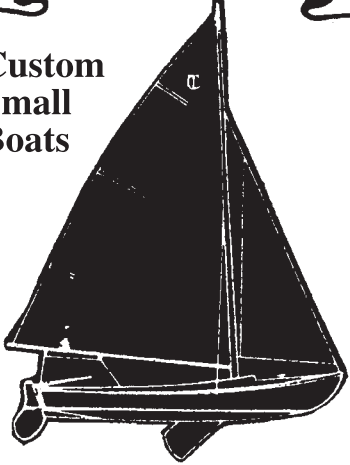
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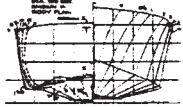
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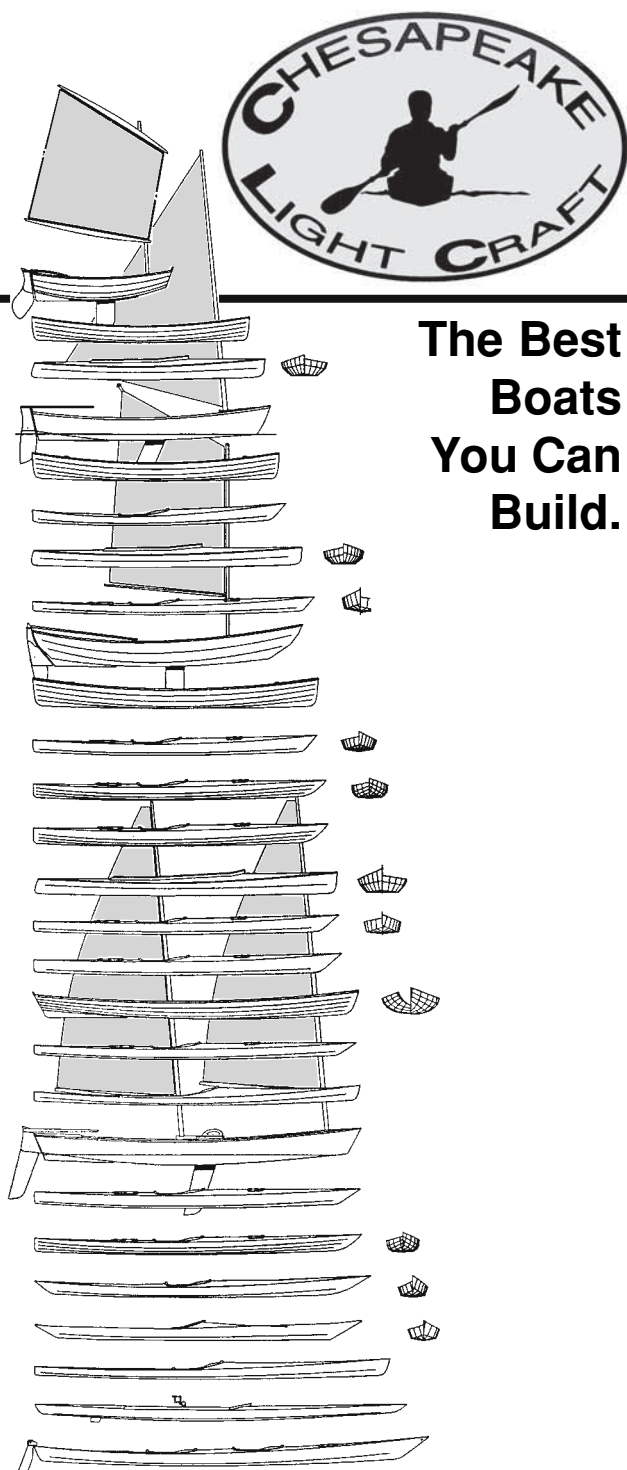
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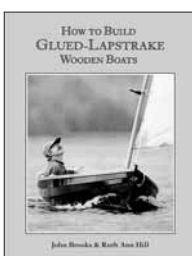
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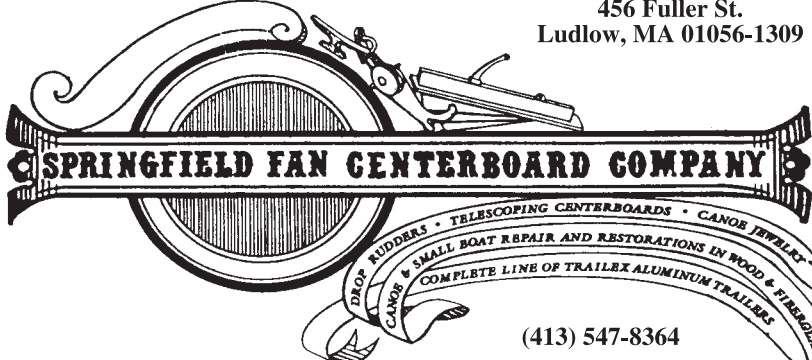
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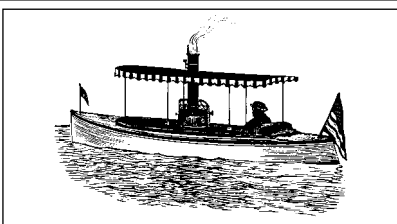
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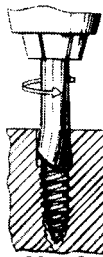
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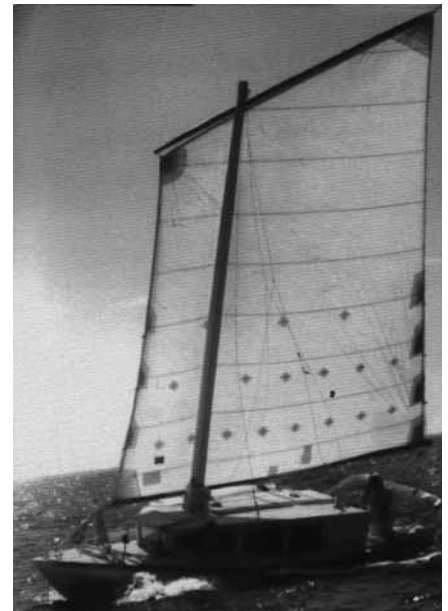
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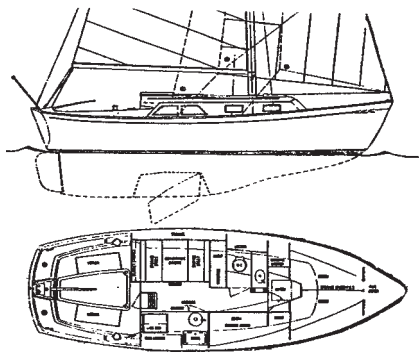


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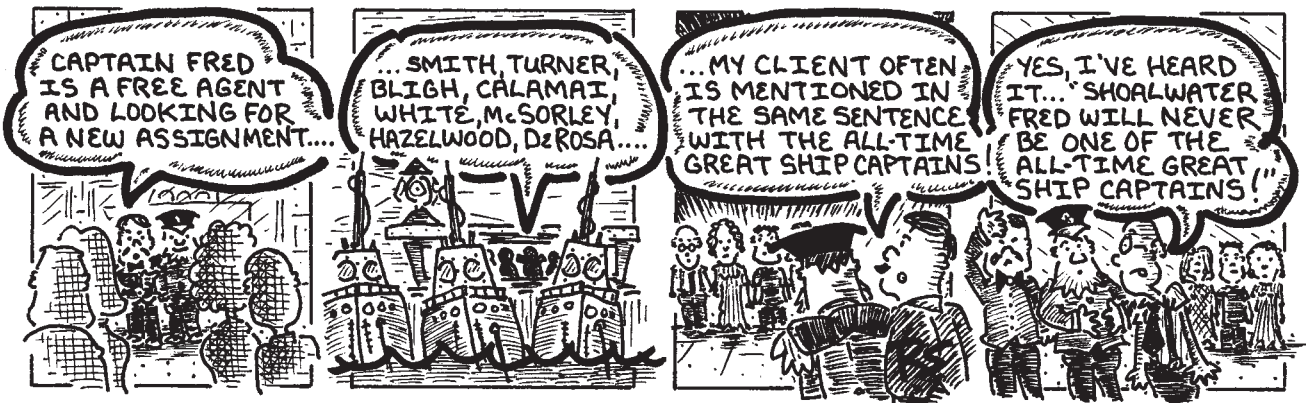
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